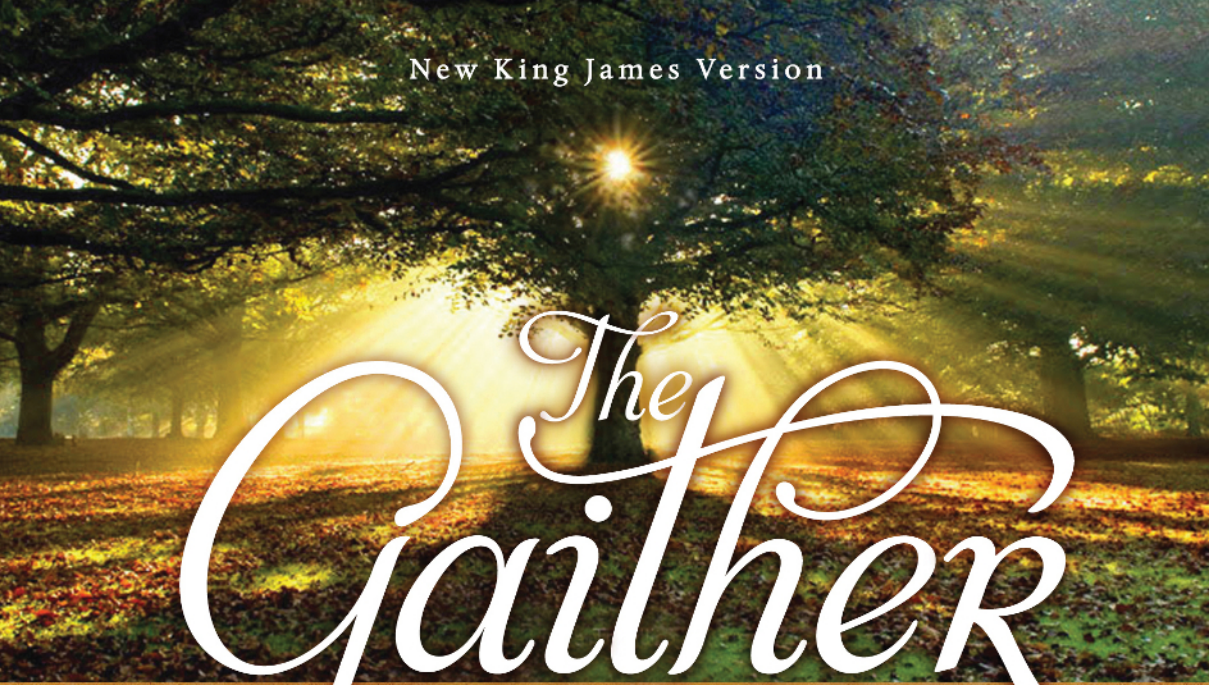
New King James Version

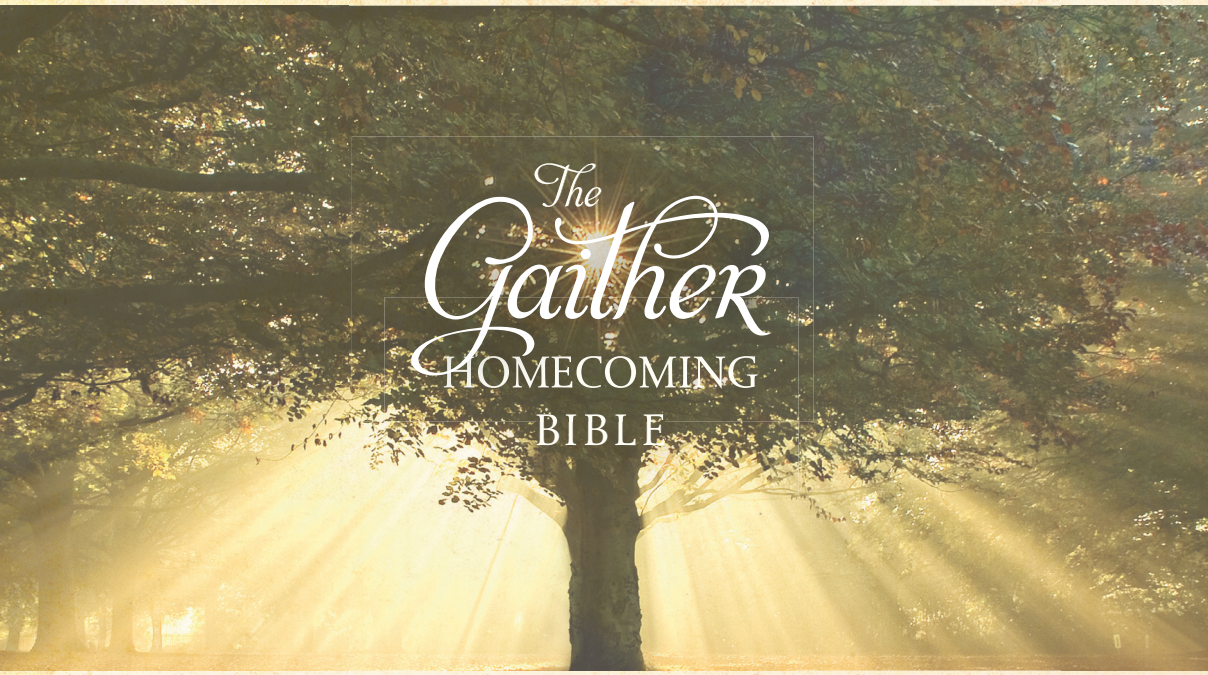


The Gaither Homecoming Bible

Bill & Gloria Gaither
General Editors

Inspiring Hope Through *Scripture*, *Song*, and *Story*

Signature Series



PRESENTED TO

BY

DATE

OCCASION



From Our Family to Yours . . .

Two decades ago when we thought we would hang it up after a thirty-year career, Bill decided to do one last recording with the Vocal Band to say thank you to some of the singers that got his attention as a young teenager, first because of their music, then because of its message. He invited many of those heroes of his youth to come sing on one song, "Where Could I Go but to the Lord." That gathering turned into a series of rather spontaneous recordings and video tapings that have come to be known as "Homecomings" of people who sing and tell of how some truth of God's Word comes alive for them as a result of or an inspiration for a song.

These artists are unbelievably (or maybe believably) regular people who just happen to sing, travel in buses on weekends, often in caravan, and help raise each other's children. They are not theologians or professional religionists. They are just regular people who happen to be convinced that God's Word is practical and helpful in the nitty-gritty of life.

The *Homecoming Bible* came to be because we are thoroughly convinced that God's Word could *inspire* people of all ages to believe that Scripture is a living thing that speaks to regular people in the trenches of life in this pessimistic and cynical time.

In fact, it is the surprising power of this living Word intersecting the daily of our lives that has inspired so many of the songs that have outlived us all and still continues to inspire great songwriters today. What if these songs were to show up right in the middle of the time-tested text that illuminated these writers in the reality of their experiences?

Think about it. Hasn't it been a song that has shown up to rescue you when you were going down for the third time? Wasn't it a phrase from a song that turned the light on for you when you seemed most confused or most challenged? Our feedback over fifty years of music ministry has told us that most often it is a song that gets us all through. Yes, *through* is the most common word we hear: "Your music got us *through*."

We have found the Word of God to be a living, vital force in our real, walking-around lives. It is our hope that the stories and experiences we and the Homecoming family of singers, writers, and musicians share will encourage and inspire you to take seriously the Bible's claim to be a light for your path, a shield from negative forces, a sharp sword when you feel attacked, sweet honey in your mouth, and a dependable guide for life's journey. Most of all, we hope a developing love for the Scriptures will lead you to the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Bill & Gloria Gaither



Contributors



Jeff Allen is a comedian, speaker, and author who entertains audiences of all backgrounds and walks of life. He has performed in televised comedy shows on every U.S. cable comedy network in addition to a full schedule of live appearances including Las Vegas comedy clubs, corporate engagements, and churches all over the country. His uniquely hilarious perspective on life, marriage, parenting, and faith often includes his remarkable story of recovery as well.



Billy Blackwood was just a kid when he began traveling in a group started by his dad, the late James Blackwood of the groundbreaking Blackwood Brothers Quartet. In the mid-seventies Billy joined an opening act with Elvis and quickly learned that secular music was not his calling. He has since sung gospel music all over the world with groups and as a solo artist, and he leads worship at his home church.



Terry Blackwood, son of Blackwood Brothers Quartet cofounder Doyle Blackwood, grew up singing gospel music and went on to sing with highly acclaimed vocal groups The Imperials and Andrus, Blackwood and Co. Now, in addition to his solo work and quartet work, Terry is featured in numerous volumes in the Gaither Homecoming series.



Ronnie Booth was only five years old when he made his first television appearance with The Rebels Quartet, of which his father was a member. From then on his love for music drove him to pursue every possible singing opportunity. Today Ronnie, his brother, Michael, and their brother-in-Christ, Jim Brady, comprise the award-winning gospel trio The Booth Brothers.



Rebecca Isaacs Bowman is a singer, songwriter, and rhythm guitar player for the multi-award-winning gospel bluegrass group The Isaacs.



Melissa Brady, who is married to Booth Brothers' baritone, Jim Brady, is a talented singer/songwriter whose songs have been recorded by The Booth Brothers, Legacy Five, Ivan Parker, The Whisnants, and Tribute Quartet. Several of her songs have become top ten songs on the gospel music charts. She has also performed with LordSong, The Hoppers, The Martins, and Lynda Randle, and on the Mark Lowry Tour.



Sue Buchanan is an author, speaker, cheerleader, and contributor to *Homecoming Magazine*.



Jason Clark is a songwriter, producer, and vocalist for the six-time Grammy® Award-winning group The Nelons, alongside his wife, original Nelons member Kelly Nelon-Clark, and an up-and-coming generation of Nelons: Amber and Autumn.



Kelly Nelon Clark is a Dove Award winner whose singing career began in June of 1972 when Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductee Rex Nelon asked his daughter if she wanted to "fill in for the summer" with the legendary LeFevres. Now, decades later, Kelly continues the Nelon family legacy with her husband, Jason, and her daughters, Amber and Autumn.



Kim Collingsworth is a remarkable pianist who, along with her husband, Phillip, and their four talented children, has been inspiring audiences for more than twenty-five years. The award-winning Collingsworth Family features stellar family harmonies and songs that focus squarely on eternal things.



Roberta Croteau, Managing Editor of *Homecoming Magazine* and two-time author, has been immersed in the world of magazine and book publishing for twenty years and counting. A Canadian by birth, she now makes her home in Nashville, Tennessee, where she is mom to two felines, a friend to the Homecoming family, and a woman who faithfully fulfills her calling to serve as a strong-but-silent influencer through the written word.



Lisa Daggs is a full-time singer whose story is as remarkable as her voice. Once an addict whose lifestyle led her to multiple arrests and personal crises, she now sings of Christ's transforming love, which has redeemed her mistakes and given her a unique compassion for people who need to hear the Good News of Jesus.



Ann Downing is a singer and songwriter who started her career in music singing with the legendary Speers and eventually formed The Downings with her husband, Paul, who passed away in 1992. She continues to sing for women's conferences, churches, and other special events and appears in numerous volumes in the Homecoming series.



Jeff Easter and his wife, Sheri, both grew up in bluegrass-singing families. They met in 1984 at an Albert E. Brumley Sundown to Sunup Gospel Sing and they quickly knew they were destined to begin their own musical legacy together. Jeff's quick wit, sincerity, and deep musical roots bring a unique balance of humor and professionalism to the Dove Award-winning and Grammy®-nominated musical duo known as Jeff and Sheri Easter.



Sheri Easter grew up in a family of gospel bluegrass singers known as The Lewis Family, and she continues her family's rich legacy as a singer, songwriter, author, and breast cancer survivor. She and her husband, Jeff, have travelled together for more than a quarter-century singing the Good News to audiences around the world. Jeff and Sheri Easter have received two Grammy® nominations and multiple Dove Awards.



Joy Gardner traveled with The Downings and as a background vocalist for the Bill Gaither Trio before she and her husband, Landy, began their twenty-five-year journey as directors for the Christ Church Choir. With the Christ Church Choir, Joy has traveled all over the world singing in venues of all kinds. She is also a beloved member of the Gaither Homecoming family and a featured vocalist on numerous volumes in the Homecoming series and live concert events.



Karen Peck Gooch is among southern gospel music's most beloved sopranos. She travelled with The Nelons until she and her husband, Rickey, founded the award-winning trio Karen Peck and New River, now comprised of Karen, her sister, Susan Peck Johnson, and the talented Jeff Hawes.



Buddy Greene is an eclectic American musician, singer, and songwriter who blends a variety of musical influences—bluegrass, rhythm and blues, and country—into his own unique brand of roots music. He appears regularly in venues of all kinds, has appeared on national television, and has penned numerous songs recorded by other artists, including "Mary, Did You Know?" his famous collaboration with Mark Lowry.



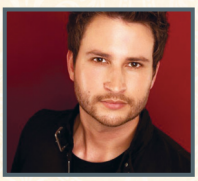
TaRanda Greene is a powerhouse singer who spent thirteen years ministering with gospel trio The Greenes before her husband (also a fellow group member) passed away in 2010. She now continues her ministry as a solo artist and member of the Gaither Homecoming family.



Rodney Griffin graduated with a biology degree from Berea College in Kentucky, but his heart belonged to gospel music and the great songs he grew up on. He lacked the confidence and opportunity to sing professionally at that time, but nothing could stop him from writing songs. When the opportunity arose he began singing with a local group and eventually went on to sing professionally, a blessing for which he is still grateful. He has now been the baritone singer for the award-winning southern gospel group Greater Vision since 1993, and he has contributed to Greater Vision's repertoire of great songs as well as songs for other gospel groups. He was named Favorite Songwriter in the *Singing News* Fan Awards every year from 1998 to 2011 and Favorite Baritone in 2006, and two of his songs have won Favorite Song (1999 and 2000).



Ernie Haase is the founder and leader of the Grammy®-nominated, Dove Award-winning southern gospel quartet Ernie Haase and Signature Sound. Before forming the quartet, Ernie sang tenor for the renowned Cathedrals until the group and its founding members, George Younce and Glen Payne, retired.



Jeff Hawes was an English teacher in Jackson County, Alabama, before he was chosen as one of three contestants to represent Atlanta for the Gospel Music Channel's hit reality show Gospel Dream, where he advanced to the top twelve in the nation. He now sings full-time with the three-time Grammy®-nominated group Karen Peck and New River.



Judy Martin Hess and her siblings, Joyce Martin Sanders and Jonathan Martin, comprise the Grammy®-nominated and Dove Award-winning trio The Martins. Their unmatched family harmonies and eclectic musical style has made them a favorite on the Homecoming stage and in the Gaither Homecoming series.



Lou Wills Hildreth, a member of the Original Wills Family, started singing publicly at the tender age of ten and continued singing with the group for the next twelve years. The group traveled to all fifty states and overseas and was featured weekly on a nationally syndicated television program (the first ever to air in color). Since that time, this Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductee has served the gospel music industry as a songwriter, publisher, journalist, television host, influencer, 20-year member of the Gospel Music Association board, founding member of the Southern Gospel Music Guild, and a diehard fan and supporter of southern gospel music.



Dallas Holm is a Christian singer-songwriter and pioneer in the field of contemporary Christian music. His ministry has spanned more than four decades and he has written numerous influential songs, including the time-honored favorite "Rise Again."



Connie Hopper is a Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductee who has spent the past half-century traveling around the world singing the Good News as matriarch of award-winning family group The Hoppers.



Dean Hopper sings with the multi-award-winning southern gospel family group The Hoppers with his wife, Kim, his parents, Connie and Claude, and his brother, Michael.



Kim Hopper is one of gospel music's most dynamic voices. As a child, she began singing with her brothers as a part of the talented musical family The Greenes. Kim remained with The Greenes for ten years, then married Dean Hopper in November of 1988. The following year she joined The Hoppers, also a family group with a long-respected legacy in gospel music. Kim and Dean reside in Summerfield, North Carolina, with their two daughters, Karlye Jade and Lexus Jazz.



Lily Isaacs was a New York City theater performer and folk artist with Columbia Records in the mid-'60s as half of the folk duo Lily and Maria when she met a bluegrass artist named Joe Isaacs. The couple married and began raising a family of world-class artists and musicians now known as multi-award-winning gospel bluegrass group The Isaacs.



Susan Jackson sings in the three-time Grammy®-nominated southern gospel group Karen Peck and New River with her sister, Karen.



Bob and Jeanne Johnson are Dove Award-winning artists whose careers span nearly four decades. They have sung with the Gethsemane Quartet, The Speers, and as a duo; they have appeared on Christian television networks across North America in addition to their participation in the Homecoming series.



Mylon LeFevre is a veteran artist and songwriter who was born into a beloved singing family known as The Singing LeFevres and eventually became the leader of the Grammy® Award-winning band Mylon and Broken Heart. This Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductee still travels around North America speaking, teaching, and singing for live events and television appearances.



Solveig Leithaug is a Norwegian-born, Dove Award-winning singer and songwriter whose pure, sweet voice is like a breath of fresh air for the soul. She is a solo artist and has made multiple appearances on the Gaither Homecoming stage and DVD series.



Mark Lowry is an author, songwriter, artist, and comedian. He sings baritone for the Gaither Vocal Band, he cowrote the beloved Christmas song, "Mary Did You Know?", and he is perhaps the funniest man in all of gospel music. He is admittedly a doubter who has more questions than answers, and he loves Jesus relentlessly.



Jonathan Martin and his sisters, Joyce Martin-Sanders and Judy Martin-Hess, comprise the multi-award-winning trio The Martins. Their sound is a refreshing blend of contemporary and time-tested southern gospel, and they are a favorite in the Gaither Homecoming series and on the Homecoming stage.



Gene McDonald sang tenor with his family for years; then his voice changed and he developed his distinct bass sound. He attended Ben Speer's Stamps Baxter School of Music, has sung bass for several quartets over the years including nine years with The Florida Boys, and he is featured on multiple Homecoming recordings, DVDs and tour dates.



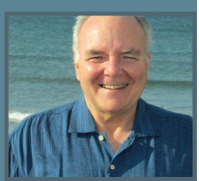
Destiny Rambo McGuire is a passionate communicator with a golden voice whose musical and songwriting gifts are part of her DNA as daughter of Grammy® Award-winning songwriters Dony McGuire and Reba Rambo-McGuire and granddaughter of songwriting legend Dottie Rambo. She is a vital part of the trio Rambo-McGuire, traveling across North America and overseas to communicate the life-changing love of Jesus.



Dony McGuire is a gifted songwriter, singer, and musician whose story is filled with successes, prestigious honors and awards, and with low points when he embraced God's redeeming grace firsthand. Once the piano player for The Downings, Dony is now a songwriter, a performing artist with the trio Rambo-McGuire, and a pastor at The River at Music City, alongside his wife, Reba Rambo-McGuire.



Gary McSpadden is a preacher's kid from Texas who has sung with the five of the best-loved gospel groups of this century: The Statesmen, The Oak Ridge Boys, The Imperials, The Bill Gaither Trio, and the Gaither Vocal Band. More recently he has served as a television host for programs that encourage and inspire audiences with the Good News of Jesus.



Ed Miller brings insight and inspiration to hungry hearts all over the country as a teacher of the Word. Gloria has used his Bible studies in her Monday Bible study for years, and Ed has been a frequent speaker at places where hungry hearts gather. He is the author of *Letters for the Thirsty* and *God's Dawn for Every Darkness*.



Larry Wayne Morbitt is an accomplished classical tenor singer with an impressive resume of notable performances around the world including opera stages, Broadway, and many other musical theater experiences, as well as television and radio work. He also loves the Lord and enjoys singing about his faith at churches, conferences, and special events.



Gordon Mote plays keyboard for multiple Gaither Vocal Band and Homecoming recordings and tours. He is among Nashville's most sought-after session players and has been honored as Keyboard Player of the Year by the Academy of Country Music for multiple years consecutively.



Buddy Mullins is a Gaither Vocal Band alumnus who has served his artist calling both as a solo artist and on staff in local churches. He is currently the worship pastor in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, at The Chapel at Crosspoint.



Jim Murray is a five-time Grammy® Award winner, fourteen-time Dove Award winner, and Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductee. He joined The Imperials in 1966 and remained the group's tenor for the next twenty years before joining the Gaither Vocal Band for five years. He is currently involved in local music ministry in the Hermitage, Tennesee, area where he lives with his wife, Lorretta.



Calvin Newton was a boy soprano who took up amateur boxing because he was tired of being bullied, and he eventually won a Kentucky Golden Gloves championship. In his late teens, he was recruited to join The Blackwood Brothers Quartet, and after years of singing with the Blackwoods and other groups, he cofounded a pioneering group called the Sons of Song. After some wayward years involving substance abuse, white-collar crime, and a resulting prison sentence, Calvin began to experience firsthand the Good News he had been singing about for so many years. Calvin has a loving family and is enjoying his life as an octogenarian more than he ever would have thought possible. He still loves to sing every chance he gets.



Laura Lee Oldham is a gifted writer who was married to renowned singer Doug Oldham for fifty-eight years before Doug passed away in 2010. After years of staying home with their daughters when Doug travelled, Laura Lee and Doug joined creative forces, adding humorous and heartwarming vignettes Laura Lee had written to Doug's musical program. In addition to live concerts and recordings, Laura Lee and her husband coauthored inspirational books, *Some Things Are Priceless* (1991) and *There is Hope* (1981).



Ivan Parker has been singing southern gospel music for more than three decades. Before he became an award-winning solo artist and a favorite on the Gaither Homecoming stage, he sang with the renowned Dove Award-winning quartet Gold City.



Squire Parsons is a gospel singer, songwriter, and Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductee who has written hundreds of songs, including the award-winning southern gospel standard "Beulah Land." He sang baritone with The Kingsmen Quartet before setting out on his own as a solo artist and is an ordained minister.



Janet Paschal is a beloved artist, songwriter, author, and breast cancer survivor, who loves nothing more than communicating the Good News of Jesus, whether through songs, books, or simply living her life.



Reba Rambo-McGuire is a Grammy® Award-winning songwriter and performer who continues a rich legacy of musical excellence as daughter of legendary songwriter Dottie Rambo. In addition to her work as a songwriter and an artist with the trio Rambo-McGuire, she is a pastor alongside her husband, Dony, at The River at Music City.



Lynda Randle is a beloved gospel artist who has found herself at the very top of the *Billboard* charts, yet she is not just a singer; she is also author, a speaker, a mentor, and the founder of Woman After God's Own Heart conferences, geared specifically to address the spiritual needs of women. In addition to these important roles are her most important titles: mom to Patience and Joy, and wife to her pastor husband, Michael.



Charlotte Ritchie started her musical career as a soprano for The Nelons and was first introduced to Homecoming listeners more than a decade ago during her years as a vocalist for Jeff and Sheri Easter. Her velvety voice can be heard in the background vocals on numerous artists' recordings and on her own solo recordings, on Christian radio, in solo concerts, and as a regular on the Gaither Homecoming stage.



LuLu Roman (born Bertha Louise Hable) is an actress, comedienne, and singer who became a household name during her days on the cast of the hit television show *Hee Haw*. After a season of drug addiction and incarceration, she began her road to recovery and her journey with Christ. She is now singing about her Savior in addition to her comedy work and she enjoys working as a representative for Compassion International.



Joyce Martin Sanders and her two siblings, Jonathan Martin and Judy Martin-Hess, comprise The Martins, a trio that has appeared in numerous volumes in the Homecoming series and has recorded more than a dozen albums featuring their eclectic range of time-tested classics and fresh inspirational songs.



Reggie and Ladye Love Smith comprise a vocal duo that has performed in more than a dozen countries, including some of the world's most prestigious venues. In addition to their own concerts and recording projects, they have recorded and performed with a long list of country and gospel music's most beloved artists, including Vestal Goodman, Sandi Patty, Larnelle Harris, Dolly Parton, George Jones, Lee Greenwood, Steven Curtis Chapman, and many others.



Faye Speer, the respected wife of the late Brock Speer and longtime alto singer in The Speers, now spends much of her time volunteering at Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee, serving children who are hospitalized with serious illness.



Tanya Goodman Sykes is a Grammy® Award–winning singer and songwriter whose father, the late Rusty Goodman, taught her early in life how to recognize and communicate a great song. She is a solo artist and is featured in numerous volumes in the Homecoming series, among which is her unforgettable performance of Rusty's song "Look For Me" in *Singin' with the Saints.*



Russ Taff is a thirteen-time Grammy® winner whose soulful, passionate voice is among the most recognizable voices in the world of gospel music. Once hailed by Billboard Magazine as "the single most electrifying voice in Christian music," his music is both contemporary and timeless. After a groundbreaking career in contemporary Christian music with a repertoire reflecting his broad range of musical influences, his journey to the Homecoming stage brought Russ full circle, back to the music he first fell in love with as a young boy.



Tori Taff is an author, speaker, and Grammy®-nominated songwriter and she is on the editorial staff of *Homecoming Magazine*. Tori and her husband, Russ Taff, live in Brentwood, Tennessee, with their daughters, Madi Rose and Charlotte.



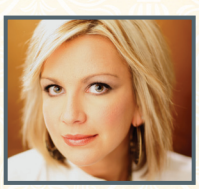
David Teems spent most of his postgraduate years as a full-time musician, songwriter, and performer until music took a backseat to his literary passions. He is now the author of *To Love is Christ* (Thomas Nelson Publishers), *Thereby Hangs a Tale* (Harvest House Publishers), *Discovering Your Spiritual Center* (Abilene Christian University Press), and most recently, *Tyndale: The Man Who Gave God an English Voice* (Thomas Nelson Publishers).



Aaron Wilburn is a comedian and songwriter who has endeared himself to audiences of all kinds across North America with his down-home brand of southern humor and his heartwarming songs. His songs have been honored with Dove Awards and Grammy® nominations. Both his songs and his humor have been featured on numerous volumes in the Gaither Homecoming series.



Gerald Wolfe is a veteran piano player, songwriter, and current lead singer of southern gospel group Greater Vision, which he cofounded with fellow group member Mark Trammell.



Sonya Isaacs Yeary is an award-winning songwriter, vocalist, and instrumentalist for the *Billboard* chart-topping family group The Isaacs, known for their unique blend of bluegrass, country, and gospel music.









Our FAMILY RECORDS

Husband's Family

GRANDFATHER

Date Born

Brothers & Sisters

GRANDMOTHER

Date Born

Brothers & Sisters

GRANDFATHER

Date Born

Brothers & Sisters

GRANDMOTHER

Date Born

Brothers & Sisters

FATHER

Date Born

Place

Brothers & Sisters

MOTHER

Date Born

Place

Brothers & Sisters

NAME

Date Born

Place

Brothers & Sisters

Wife's Family

GRANDFATHER

Date Born

Brothers & Sisters

GRANDMOTHER

Date Born

Brothers & Sisters

GRANDFATHER

Date Born

Brothers & Sisters

GRANDMOTHER

Date Born

Brothers & Sisters

FATHER

Date Born

Place

Brothers & Sisters

MOTHER

Date Born

Place

Brothers & Sisters

NAME

Date Born

Place

Brothers & Sisters

Our FAMILY RECORDS

Our Children

NAME

Date Born

Place

NAME

Date Born

Place

NAME

Date Born

Place

NAME

Date Born

Place

NAME

Date Born

Place

NAME

Date Born

Place

Our Grandchildren

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

NAME

Date Born

Place

Mother

Father

Significant EVENTS

EVENT

Date

EVENT

Date

EVENT

Date

EVENT

Date

EVENT

Date

EVENT

Date

EVENT

Date

EVENT

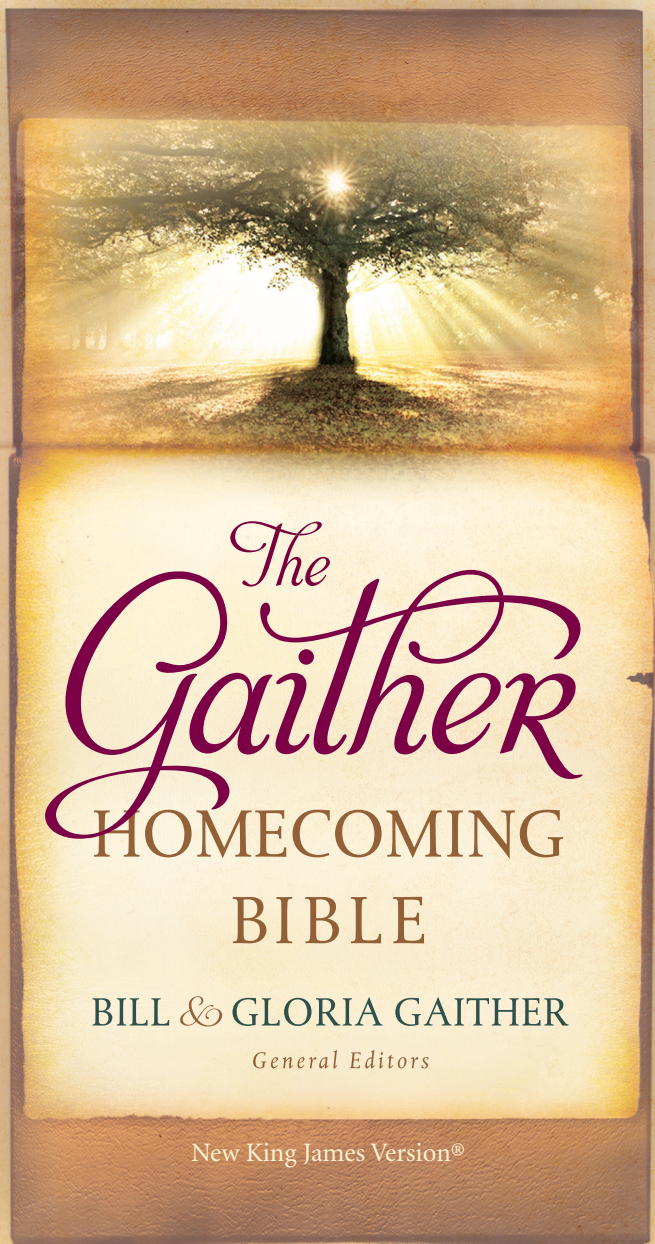
Date

EVENT

Date

EVENT

Date



The Gaither HOMECOMING BIBLE

BILL & GLORIA GAITHER
General Editors

New King James Version®

THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

NASHVILLE DALLAS MEXICO CITY RIO DE JANEIRO
www.ThomasNelson.com

The Gaither Homecoming Bible
Copyright © 2012 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.
Notes and articles copyright © 2012 by William J. Gaither, Inc.

The Holy Bible, New King James Version
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. All rights reserved.

The text of the New King James Version (NKJV) may be quoted or reprinted without prior written permission with the following qualifications:

(1) up to and including 1,000 verses may be quoted in printed form as long as the verses quoted amount to less than 50% of a complete book of the Bible and make up less than 50% of the total work in which they are quoted;

(2) all NKJV quotations must conform accurately to the NKJV text.

Any use of the NKJV text must include a proper acknowledgment as follows:

> Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

However, when quotations from the NKJV text are used in church bulletins, orders of service, Sunday School lessons, church newsletters and similar works in the course of religious instruction or services at a place of worship or other religious assembly, the following notice may be used at the end of each quotation: "NKJV."

For quotation requests not covered by the above guidelines, write to Thomas Nelson Publishers, Bible Rights and Permissions, P.O. Box 141000, Nashville, TN 37214-1000.

All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked *The Message* are taken from *The Message* by Eugene Peterson. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (TLB) are taken from *The Living Bible*. Copyright © 1997, 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Copyright information for songs in this Bible appears under "Acknowledgments" on page 1677.

Design and Typesetting Services by Koechel Peterson & Associates, Inc.
Minneapolis, MN 55406 www.koechelpeterson.com

Printed in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9RRD18 17 16 15 14 13 12

Contents

Hymns and Gospel Songs: Why We Need Them iv
Preface to the New King James Version viii
Welcome to the *Gaither Homecoming Bible* xv

The Old Testament

Genesis 1
Exodus 65
Leviticus 120
Numbers 155
Deuteronomy 200
Joshua 243
Judges 272
Ruth 300
1 Samuel 306
2 Samuel 343
1 Kings 376
2 Kings 411
1 Chronicles 445
2 Chronicles 478
Ezra 517
Nehemiah 529
Esther 546
Job 555
Psalms 595
Proverbs 735
Ecclesiastes 779
Song of Solomon . 796
Isaiah 806
Jeremiah 899
Lamentations 975
Ezekiel 985
Daniel 1041
Hosea 1063
Joel 1080
Amos 1089
Obadiah 1099
Jonah 1101
Micah 1104
Nahum 1113
Habakkuk 1116
Zephaniah 1120
Haggai 1126
Zechariah 1130
Malachi 1143

The New Testament

Matthew 1150
Mark 1212
Luke 1253
John 1316
Acts 1379
Romans 1428
1 Corinthians ... 1458
2 Corinthians ... 1484
Galatians 1506
Ephesians 1516
Philippians 1529
Colossians 1541
1 Thessalonians . 1548
2 Thessalonians . 1553
1 Timothy 1556
2 Timothy 1561
Titus 1567
Philemon 1569
Hebrews 1571
James 1598
1 Peter 1606
2 Peter 1616
1 John 1622
2 John 1630
3 John 1631
Jude 1632
Revelation 1637

Index to Songs 1670
Ackowledgments 1672
60-Day *Gaither Homecoming Bible* Reading Plan 1674

Hymns and Gospel Songs:

WHY WE NEED THEM

Gloria Gaither

As a community of believers, we have a rich reservoir of literature that chronicles our history with God and expresses for our corporate retelling the certainties of holy Scripture and personal experiences in the application of that Scripture to life. Through the ages two earmarks of the Christian have been joy *and* rest. *Joyful song has always been a way for God's people to send their gratitude back to God for His amazing provision and love and to rest in His promises as they go out to live their daily lives.*

Each generation has had its styles of expression. Certain instrumentations and chord structures, rhythms and meters have enjoyed favor for a time and then given way to new emphases. But across the generations and spectrum of stylistic preferences, great songs remain. And they remain not so much for their musical style as for the truth expressed in the text, truth so cardinal that it is proven again and again by each new generation.

This historical chain of experience gives new dimension as each new generation rediscovers for itself the power of scripturally true principles, knowing their tie of faith to those who have sung here before.

The two kinds of songs that we sing as a body of believers reflect the promise found in Revelation 12:11 that we would overcome the obstacles of any age by the "blood of the Lamb and the word of [our] testimony." This explains the power we find in *hymns*—those songs that extol and express praise for the qualities of God and the work that Jesus did for us on the Cross.

In general we could think of hymns as those songs of praise and worship we send up to God identifying for all to hear His attributes and thanking Him for His amazing intervention in our world and in our lives. In other words we sing of the incarnation: God who was before anything existed, the cause and source of all things, God of grandeur, power, and infinite glory chose to become one of us and to walk with us—Immanuel! Hymns are God-centered and call our attention upward. They are lofty in message and lift us above the earthy. They remind us of our original glory that preceded any original sin and remind us of God's intention to see that glory restored in us. The exchange in hymns, then, is vertical—connecting us to God and seeking to hear His voice speaking to our hearts in return.

Hymns are firmly rooted in God's Word and, since they are intended to be sung corporately by the fellowship of believers, pull us above our petty differences by reminding us of God's dream for us: that we would be one.

Because hymns are intended to reflect the qualities of God, they must have poetry that is beautiful, reverent, simple, accurate, and pure. The theme of a hymn should be focused and at the same time universal and not sectarian in its truth, drawing together and then upward all the divergent believers to oneness in Him.

There is no more distilled form of writing than the song lyric, and there is no more condensed form of lyric writing that hymn writing. The thought must be scripturally sound, purely true and without embellishment. This requires that every word count—every verb, every noun, every conjunction, every adverb or adjective be accurate, the perfect choice to convey true meaning so that there is no misunderstanding. Every skill of the poet's art must be called into play in hymn writing so that the clarity and beauty, creativity and purity reflect the Maker Himself in its expression.

It is equally imperative that the singer or recording artist not take liberties with the words of a hymn. It is not acceptable to embellish or be careless by changing an "at" to "in" or "Father" to "fathers" or an "and" to a "but." Such changes can totally change the meaning and the theology and violate the integrity of the scripture from which the hymn was taken.

The other kind of song that we need to sing together is the gospel song. Many a great gospel song has also survived that test of many generations of experience and often we even hear these called "hymns" because that have proven to be so true to our shared experience. These songs are horizontal. By that I mean that they are "the word of our testimony," each of us telling someone else what God has done in our lives. These songs are our story. We don't read the words of Jesus very long before we hear Him telling us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give shelter to the homeless and thus fulfill the law of love (see Gal. 5:14).

It is our deep belief that we should balance hymns and personal testimony songs in our gathering together. We *do* overcome by the "blood of the Lamb" and by "the word of our testimony." Nothing is as powerful when some cynic shoves us into a corner of theological nit-picking than taking two steps away from the belligerent finger-pointing to simply say, "I only know that once I was blind but now I see."



We need both hymns and gospel songs because every vertical commitment will eventually demand a horizontal living out in relationship with those around us. It is imperative that we know what God says in His living Word, and when we gather to worship express our gratitude for

all He is, rising above our smallness to embrace His glory. We also need to live out what He says in this Word, drawing from the great storehouse of His freely offered resources to embrace a hurting world by being what He has called us to be. The vertical. The horizontal. The hymns of praise and great scriptural truth that have withstood the test of experience must be combined with the word of our personal testimony sharing our stories of God at work through us and in us to conform us to the likeness of His Son. We need to teach both to our children. Don't worry that they might not totally understand all the words. Do you? Do I? But hymns and spiritual songs that are worth their salt are pieces of portable theology and they will throw our children a lifeline when experience is pulling them under for the third time. As with Scripture, the meaning of profoundly true songs will become clear when life gets their attention.

The praise and worship versus gospel songs argument should never come up! We need to sing the songs that have outlived us. We need to sing the songs as new and fresh as this morning's experience with our neighbor or our children. We need the songs that remind us that we have a history with God. We need the songs that sing our testimony as personal as the e-mail of encouragement we just received from a fellow believer.

All must be biblical, beautiful, true, powerful, and yes, personal. Let's encourage each other daily, singing hymns and spiritual songs. Let us never lose our joy and in the chaos of the world live at rest in Him who is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.

PREFACE TO THE *New King James Version®*

Purpose

In the preface to the 1611 edition, the translators of the Authorized Version, known popularly as the King James Bible, state that it was not their purpose "to make a new translation . . . but to make a good one better." Indebted to the earlier work of William Tyndale and others, they saw their best contribution to consist in revising and enhancing the excellence of the English versions which had sprung from the Reformation of the sixteenth century. In harmony with the purpose of the King James scholars, the translators and editors of the present work have not pursued a goal of innovation. They have perceived the Holy Bible, New King James Version, as a continuation of the labors of the earlier translators, thus unlocking for today's readers the spiritual treasures found especially in the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures.

A Living Legacy

For nearly four hundred years, and throughout several revisions of its English form, the King James Bible has been deeply revered among the Englishspeaking peoples of the world. The precision of translation for which it is historically renowned, and its majesty of style, have enabled that monumental version of the word of God to become the mainspring of the religion, language, and legal foundations of our civilization.

Although the Elizabethan period and our own era share in zeal for technical advance, the former period was more aggressively devoted to classical learning. Along with this awakened concern for the classics came a flourishing companion interest in the Scriptures, an interest that was enlivened by the conviction that the manuscripts were providentially handed down and were a trustworthy record of the inspired Word of God. The King James translators were committed to producing an English Bible that would be a precise translation, and by no means a paraphrase or a broadly approximate rendering. On the one hand, the scholars were almost as familiar with the original languages of the Bible as with their native English. On the other hand, their reverence for the divine Author and His Word assured a translation of the Scriptures in which only a principle of utmost accuracy could be accepted.

In 1786 Catholic scholar Alexander Geddes said of the King James Bible, "If accuracy and strictest attention to the letter of the text be supposed to constitute an excellent version, this is of all versions the most excellent." George Bernard Shaw

became a literary legend in the twentieth century because of his severe and often humorous criticisms of our most cherished values. Surprisingly, however, Shaw pays the following tribute to the scholars commissioned by King James: "The translation was extraordinarily well done because to the translators what they were translating was not merely a curious collection of ancient books written by different authors in different stages of culture, but the Word of God divinely revealed through His chosen and expressly inspired scribes. In this conviction they carried out their work with boundless reverence and care and achieved a beautifully artistic result." History agrees with these estimates. Therefore, while seeking to unveil the excellent *form* of the traditional English Bible, special care has also been taken in the present edition to preserve the work of *precision* which is the legacy of the 1611 translators.

Complete Equivalence in Translation

Where new translation has been necessary in the New King James Version, the most complete representation of the original has been rendered by considering the history of usage and etymology of words in their contexts. This principle of complete equivalence seeks to preserve *all* of the information in the text, while presenting it in good literary form. Dynamic equivalence, a recent procedure in Bible translation, commonly results in paraphrasing where a more literal rendering is needed to reflect a specific and vital sense. For example, complete equivalence truly renders the original text in expressions such as "lifted her voice and wept" (Gen. 21:16); "I gave you cleanness of teeth" (Amos 4:6); "Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!'" (Matt. 28:9); and "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me?" (John 2:4). Complete equivalence translates fully, in order to provide an English text that is both accurate and readable.

In keeping with the principle of complete equivalence, it is the policy to translate interjections which are commonly omitted in modern language renderings of the Bible. As an example, the interjection *behold*, in the older King James editions, continues to have a place in English usage, especially in dramatically calling attention to a spectacular scene, or an event of profound importance such as the Immanuel prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. Consequently, *behold* is retained for these occasions in the present edition. However, the Hebrew and Greek originals for this word can be translated variously, depending on the circumstances in the passage. Therefore, in addition to *behold*, words such as *indeed, look, see*, and *surely* are also rendered to convey the appropriate sense suggested by the context in each case.

In faithfulness to God and to our readers, it was deemed appropriate that all participating scholars sign a statement affirming their belief in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture, and in the inerrancy of the original autographs.



Devotional Quality

The King James scholars readily appreciated the intrinsic beauty of divine revelation. They accordingly disciplined their talents to render well-chosen English words of their time, as well as a graceful, often musical arrangement of language, which has stirred the hearts of Bible readers through the years. The translators, the committees, and the editors of the present edition, while sensitive to the late twentieth century English idiom, and while adhering faithfully to the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts, have sought to maintain those lyrical and devotional qualities that are so highly regarded in the Authorized Version. This devotional quality is especially apparent in the poetic and prophetic books, although even the relatively plain style of the Gospels and Epistles cannot strictly be likened, as sometimes suggested, to modern newspaper style. The Koine Greek of the New Testament is influenced by the Hebrew background of the writers, for whom even the gospel narratives were not merely flat utterance, but often song in various degrees of rhythm.

The Style

Students of the Bible applaud the timeless devotional character of our historic Bible. Yet it is also universally understood that our language, like all living languages, has undergone profound change since 1611. Subsequent revisions of the King James Bible have sought to keep abreast of changes in English speech. The present work is a further step toward this objective. Where obsolescence and other reading difficulties exist, presentday vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar have been carefully integrated. Words representing ancient objects, such as *chariot* and *phylactery*, have no modern substitutes and are therefore retained.

A special feature of the New King James Version is its conformity to the thought flow of the 1611 Bible. The reader discovers that the sequence and selection of words, phrases, and clauses of the new edition, while much clearer, are so close to the traditional that there is remarkable ease in listening to the reading of either edition while following with the other.

In the discipline of translating biblical and other ancient languages, a standard method of transliteration, that is, the English spelling of untranslated words, such as names of persons and places, has never been commonly adopted. In keeping with the design of the present work, the King James spelling of untranslated words is retained, although made uniform throughout. For example, instead of the spellings *Isaiah* and *Elijah* in the Old Testament, and *Esaias* and *Elias* in the New Testament, *Isaiah* and *Elijah* now appear in both Testaments.

King James doctrinal and theological terms, for example, *propitiation, justification,* and *sanctification,* are generally familiar to Englishspeaking peoples. Such terms have been retained except where the original language indicates need for a more precise translation.

Readers of the Authorized Version will immediately be struck by the absence of several pronouns: *thee, thou,* and *ye* are replaced by the simple *you,* while *your* and *yours* are substituted for *thy* and *thine* as applicable. *Thee, thou, thy* and *thine* were once forms of address to express a special relationship to human as well as divine persons. These pronouns are no longer part of our language. However, reverence for God in the present work is preserved by capitalizing pronouns, including *You, Your,* and *Yours,* which refer to Him. Additionally, capitalization of these pronouns benefits the reader by clearly distinguishing divine and human persons referred to in a passage. Without such capitalization the distinction is often obscure, because the antecedent of a pronoun is not always clear in the English translation.

In addition to the pronoun usages of the seventeenth century, the *eth* and *est* verb endings, so familiar in the earlier King James editions, are now obsolete. Unless a speaker is schooled in these verb endings, there is common difficulty in selecting the correct form to be used with a given subject of the verb in vocal prayer. That is, should we use *love, loveth,* or *lovest? do, doeth, doest,* or *dost? have, hath,* or *hast*? Because these forms are obsolete, contemporary English usage has been substituted for the previous verb endings.

In older editions of the King James Version, the frequency of the connective *and* far exceeded the limits of present English usage. Also, biblical linguists agree that the Hebrew and Greek original words for this conjunction may commonly be translated otherwise, depending on the immediate context. Therefore, instead of *and,* alternatives such as *also, but, however, now, so, then,* and *thus* are accordingly rendered in the present edition, when the original language permits.

The real character of the Authorized Version does not reside in its archaic pronouns or verbs or other grammatical forms of the seventeenth century, but rather in the care taken by its scholars to impart the letter and spirit of the original text in a majestic and reverent style.

The Format

The format of the New King James Version is designed to enhance the vividness and devotional quality of the Holy Scriptures:

- Subject headings assist the reader to identify topics and transitions in the biblical content.
- Words or phrases in *italics* indicate expressions in the original language which require clarification by additional English words, as also done throughout the history of the King James Bible.

- Oblique type in the New Testament indicates a quotation from the Old Testament.
- Prose is divided into paragraphs to indicate the structure of thought.
- Poetry is structured as contemporary verse to reflect the poetic form and beauty of the passage in the original language.
- The covenant name of God was usually translated from the Hebrew as LORD or GOD (using capital letters as shown) in the King James Old Testament. This tradition is maintained. In the present edition the name is so capitalized whenever the covenant name is quoted in the New Testament from a passage in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament Text

The Hebrew Bible has come down to us through the scrupulous care of ancient scribes who copied the original text in successive generations. By the sixth century A.D. the scribes were succeeded by a group known as the Masoretes, who continued to preserve the sacred Scriptures for another five hundred years in a form known as the Masoretic Text. Babylonia, Palestine, and Tiberias were the main centers of Masoretic activity; but by the tenth century A.D. the Masoretes of Tiberias, led by the family of ben Asher, gained the ascendancy. Through subsequent editions, the ben Asher text became in the twelfth century the only recognized form of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Daniel Bomberg printed the first Rabbinic Bible in 1516–17; that work was followed in 1524–25 by a second edition prepared by Jacob ben Chayyim and also published by Bomberg. The text of ben Chayyim was adopted in most subsequent Hebrew Bibles, including those used by the King James translators. The ben Chayyim text was also used for the first two editions of Rudolph Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* of 1906 and 1912. In 1937 Paul Kahle published a third edition of *Biblia Hebraica*. This edition was based on the oldest dated manuscript of the ben Asher text, the Leningrad Manuscript B19a (A.D. 1008), which Kahle regarded as superior to that used by ben Chayyim.

For the New King James Version the text used was the 1967/1977 Stuttgart edition of the *Biblia Hebraica*, with frequent comparisons being made with the Bomberg edition of 1524–25. The Septuagint (Greek) Version of the Old Testament and the Latin Vulgate also were consulted. In addition to referring to a variety of ancient versions of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New King James Version draws on the resources of relevant manuscripts from the Dead Sea caves. In the few places where the Hebrew was so obscure that the 1611 King James was compelled to follow one of the versions, but where information is now available to resolve the problems, the New King James Version follows the Hebrew text. Significant variations are recorded in the New King James translators' notes.

The New Testament Text

There is more manuscript support for the New Testament than for any other body of ancient literature. Over five thousand Greek, eight thousand Latin, and many more manuscripts in other languages attest the integrity of the New Testament. There is only one basic New Testament used by Protestants, Roman

Catholics, and Orthodox, by conservatives and liberals. Minor variations in hand copying have appeared through the centuries, before mechanical printing began about A.D. 1450.

Some variations exist in the spelling of Greek words, in word order, and in similar details. These ordinarily do not show up in translation and do not affect the sense of the text in any way.

Other manuscript differences such as omission or inclusion of a word or a clause, and two paragraphs in the Gospels, should not overshadow the overwhelming degree of *agreement* which exists among the ancient records. Bible readers may be assured that the most important differences in English New Testaments of today are due, not to manuscript divergence, but to the way in which translators view the task of translation: How literally should the text be rendered? How does the translator view the matter of biblical inspiration? Does the translator adopt a paraphrase when a literal rendering would be quite clear and more to the point? The New King James Version follows the historic precedent of the Authorized Version in maintaining a literal approach to translation, except where the idiom of the original language cannot be translated directly into our tongue.

The King James New Testament was based on the traditional text of the Greekspeaking churches, first published in 1516, and later called the Textus Receptus or Received Text. Although based on the relatively few available manuscripts, these were representative of many more which existed at the time but only became known later. In the late nineteenth century, B. Westcott and F. Hort taught that this text had been officially edited by the fourthcentury church, but a total lack of historical evidence for this event has forced a revision of the theory. It is now widely held that the Byzantine Text that largely supports the Textus Receptus has as much right as the Alexandrian or any other tradition to be weighed in determining the text of the New Testament.

Since the 1880s most contemporary translations of the New Testament have relied upon a relatively few manuscripts discovered chiefly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such translations depend primarily on two manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, because of their greater age. The Greek text obtained by using these sources and the related papyri (our most ancient manuscripts) is known as the Alexandrian Text. However, some scholars have grounds for doubting the faithfulness of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, since they often disagree with one another, and Sinaiticus exhibits excessive omission.

A third viewpoint of New Testament scholarship holds that the best text is based on the consensus of the majority of existing Greek manuscripts. This text is called the Majority Text. Most of these manuscripts are in substantial agreement. Even though many are late, and none is earlier than the fifth century, usually their readings are verified by papyri, ancient versions, quotations from the early church fathers, or a combination of these. The Majority Text is similar to the Textus Receptus, but it corrects those readings which have little or no support in the Greek manuscript tradition.

Today, scholars agree that the science of New Testament textual criticism is in a state of flux. Very few scholars still favor the Textus Receptus as such, and then often for its historical prestige as the text of Luther, Calvin, Tyndale, and

the King James Version. For about a century most have followed a Critical Text (so called because it is edited according to specific principles of textual criticism) which depends heavily upon the Alexandrian type of text. More recently many have abandoned this Critical Text (which is quite similar to the one edited by Westcott and Hort) for one that is more eclectic. Finally, a small but growing number of scholars prefer the Majority Text, which is close to the traditional text except in the Revelation.

In light of these facts, and also because the New King James Version is the fifth revision of a historic document translated from specific Greek texts, the editors decided to retain the traditional text in the body of the New Testament and to indicate major Critical and Majority Text variant readings in the translators' notes. Although these variations are duly indicated in the translators' notes of the present edition, it is most important to emphasize that fully eightyfive percent of the New Testament text is the same in the Textus Receptus, the Alexandrian Text, and the Majority Text.

New King James Translators' Notes

Significant textual explanations, alternate translations, and New Testament citations of Old Testament passages are supplied in the New King James translators' notes.

Important textual variants in the Old Testament are identified in a standard form.

The textual notes in the present edition of the New Testament make no evaluation of readings, but do clearly indicate the manuscript sources of readings. They objectively present the facts without such tendentious remarks as "the best manuscripts omit" or "the most reliable manuscripts read." Such notes are value judgments that differ according to varying viewpoints on the text. By giving a clearly defined set of variants the New King James Version benefits readers of all textual persuasions.

Where significant variations occur in the New Testament Greek manuscripts, textual notes are classified as follows:

NU-Text: These variations from the traditional text generally represent the Alexandrian or Egyptian type of text described previously in "The New Testament Text." They are found in the Critical Text published in the twenty seventh edition of the Nestle Aland Greek New Testament (N) and in the United Bible Societies' fourth edition (U), hence the acronym, "NUText."

M-Text: This symbol indicates points of variation in the Majority Text from the traditional text, as also previously discussed in "The New Testament Text." It should be noted that M stands for whatever reading is printed in the published *Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, whether supported by overwhelming, strong, or only a divided majority textual tradition.

The textual notes reflect the scholarship of the past two centuries and will assist the reader to observe the variations between the different manuscript traditions of the New Testament. Such information is generally not available in English translations of the New Testament.

WELCOME TO THE

Gaither Homecoming Bible

THIS BIBLE IS FULL of inspiring articles, moving testimonies, and encouraging insights. Here's a guide to all the extra features:

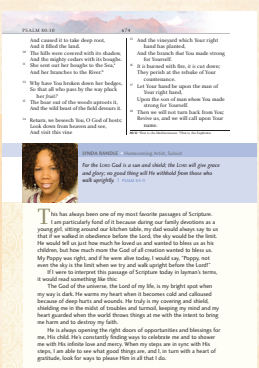
Gloria Gaither explains the inspiration for twenty-five Gaither songs

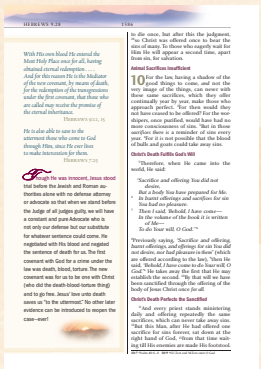


Stories behind fifty of the world's most popular hymns and gospel songs

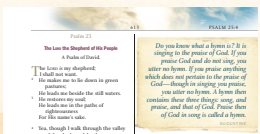


Devotional articles by Homecoming artists and writers on their favorite passages of Scripture

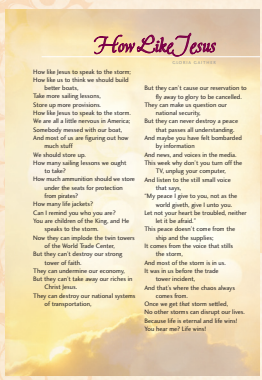




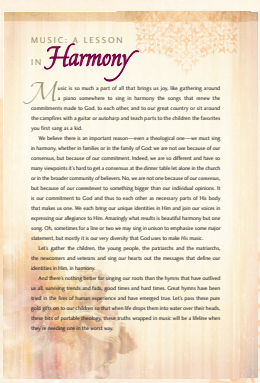
Scripture devotions by Gloria Gaither



Quotes from greats of the faith reflecting on the importance of music in the life of believers



Original poems by Gloria Gaither



Five inspiring articles by Gloria Gaither on the significance of music throughout the Bible and in the lives of today's believers



The OLD TESTAMENT

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

Genesis

The History of Creation

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [2]The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was*[a] on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

[3]Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. [4]And God saw the light, that *it was* good; and God divided the light from the darkness. [5]God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

[6]Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." [7]Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament; and it was so. [8]And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

[9]Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry *land* appear"; and it was so. [10]And God called the dry *land* Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that *it was* good.

[11]Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. [12]And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed according to its kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. [13]So the evening and the morning were the third day.

[14]Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; [15]and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. [16]Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made* the stars also. [17]God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, [18]and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was* good. [19]So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

[20]Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." [21]So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. [22]And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." [23]So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

[24]Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, *each* according to its kind"; and it was so. [25]And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good.

[26]Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all[a] the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

1:2 [a]Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Hebrew or Aramaic. **1:26** [a]Syriac reads *all the wild animals of*.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

GENESIS 1:1

When it comes to classic hymns, a title like "Song of Brother Sun," might seem out of place. In fact, it sounds more like a song from the 1960s hippie movement. Instead, it's the original title of a hymn by St. Francis of Assissi, now known as "All Creatures of Our God and King." A lover of nature, animals, and anyone in need, St. Francis is widely remembered and beloved by the church for his simple and compassionate lifestyle. He was born into considerable means but denounced his inheritance, choosing to live only on what he needed. He established the Franciscan Order of Friars, which eventually grew into an entire movement of men and women who followed him into his meager lifestyle for the sake of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rather than finding value in money and manmade riches, St. Francis, recognized the beauty of God's handiwork and the glory of the Lord revealed in nature. He urged the creation to join with him in worship. And he wasn't the only one. The psalmist declared as much in Psalm 148, "Praise the LORD! . . . Praise Him, sun and moon . . . For He commanded and they were created. . . . You great sea creatures and all the depths . . . mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl . . . Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven."

Is there anyone more creative than our God? He spoke, and the world came into existence. He breathed, and mankind was born. What have we to do but praise Him? And if we don't, as Christ said, "the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40).

All Creatures of Our God and King

St. Francis of Assisi | 1225

All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam!

Refrain:

O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong
Ye clouds that sail in Heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou rising moon, in praise rejoice,
Ye lights of evening, find a voice!

Refrain

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou fire so masterful and bright,
That givest man both warmth and light.

Refrain

And all ye men of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care!

Refrain

Let all things their creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!

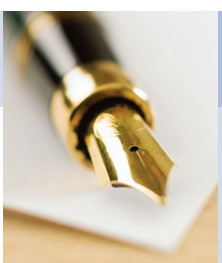
Refrain

27So God created man in His *own* image; in
the image of God He created him; male
and female He created them. 28Then God
blessed them, and God said to them, "Be
fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and
subdue it; have dominion over the fish of
the sea, over the birds of the air, and over
every living thing that moves on the earth."
29And God said, "See, I have given you
every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the
face of all the earth, and every tree whose
fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.
30Also, to every beast of the earth, to every
bird of the air, and to everything that creeps
on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given*
every green herb for food"; and it was so.
31Then God saw everything that He had
made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the
evening and the morning were the sixth day.
2 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all
the host of them, were finished. 2And on
the seventh day God ended His work which
He had done, and He rested on the seventh
day from all His work which He had done.
3Then God blessed the seventh day and
sanctified it, because in it He rested from all
His work which God had created and made.
4This *is* the history[a] of the heavens and
the earth when they were created, in the
day that the LORD God made the earth and
the heavens, 5before any plant of the field
was in the earth and before any herb of the
field had grown. For the LORD God had not
caused it to rain on the earth, and *there was*
no man to till the ground; 6but a mist went
up from the earth and watered the whole
face of the ground.
7And the LORD God formed man *of* the
dust of the ground, and breathed into his
nostrils the breath of life; and man became
a living being.

Life in God's Garden

8The LORD God planted a garden east-
ward in Eden, and there He put the man
whom He had formed. 9And out of the
ground the LORD God made every tree grow
that is pleasant to the sight and good for
food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of
the garden, and the tree of the knowledge
of good and evil.
10Now a river went out of Eden to water
the garden, and from there it parted and
became four riverheads. 11The name of the
first *is* Pishon; it *is* the one which skirts the
whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold.
12And the gold of that land *is* good. Bdellium
and the onyx stone *are* there. 13The name of
the second river *is* Gihon; it *is* the one which
goes around the whole land of Cush. 14The
name of the third river *is* Hiddekel;[a] it *is* the

2:4 [a]Hebrew *toledoth,* literally *generations* **2:14** [a]Or *Tigris*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. | GENESIS 1:1

A friend of mine opened my study Bible and asked me, "Why do you have your name and the reference Ephesians 1:4 pasted over chapter one, verse one of Genesis?" "It is because that verse reminds me that God chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world," I said, "and that comes before God created the heavens and the earth." When I open my Bible I am always reminded of that wonder of His grace.

one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river *is* the Euphrates.

15Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

18And the LORD God said, "*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. 20So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

21And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

23And Adam said:

"This *is* now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man."

24Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

25And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The Temptation and Fall of Man

3 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

2And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

8And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?"

10So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

11And He said, "Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

12Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

13And the LORD God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14So the LORD God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this,
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you shall go,
And you shall eat dust
All the days of your life.
15 And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel."

16To the woman He said:

"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and
your conception;

In pain you shall bring forth children;
Your desire *shall be* for your husband,
And he shall rule over you."

17Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

"Cursed *is* the ground for your sake;
In toil you shall eat *of* it
All the days of your life.
18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,
And you shall eat the herb of the field.
19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread
Till you return to the ground,
For out of it you were taken;
For dust you *are,*
And to dust you shall return."

20And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.
21Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.
22Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— 23therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain Murders Abel

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." 2Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

6So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it."



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering. | GENESIS 4:4

"It doesn't seem fair," I have been told, "that Abel the shepherd brought the fruit of his labor and Cain the gardener brought the fruit of his labor, and God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's." I am quite sure that God accepted Abel's offering because he offered a sacrificial lamb by faith. It is a mistake, I think, to reason, "Abel offered a sheep because he was a shepherd." I believe he offered a sheep because he was a sinner. No doubt Cain and Abel received the same instruction about God's way of salvation from their parents. Abel came by grace; Cain came by works. God can never accept the fruit of man's labor!

8 Now Cain talked with Abel his brother;[a]
and it came to pass, when they were in the
field, that Cain rose up against Abel his
brother and killed him.
9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where *is*
Abel your brother?"
He said, "I do not know. *Am* I my brother's keeper?"
10 And He said, "What have you done?
The voice of your brother's blood cries out
to Me from the ground. 11 So now you *are*
cursed from the earth, which has opened
its mouth to receive your brother's blood
from your hand. 12 When you till the
ground, it shall no longer yield its strength
to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall
be on the earth."
13 And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment *is* greater than I can bear! 14 Surely
You have driven me out this day from the
face of the ground; I shall be hidden from
Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen *that*
anyone who finds me will kill me."
15 And the LORD said to him, "Therefore,[a]
whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be
taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set
a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him
should kill him.

The Family of Cain

16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of
Nod on the east of Eden. 17 And Cain knew
his wife, and she conceived and bore
Enoch. And he built a city, and called the
name of the city after the name of his
son—Enoch. 18 To Enoch was born Irad;
and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael
begot Methushael, and Methushael begot
Lamech.
19 Then Lamech took for himself two
wives: the name of one *was* Adah, and the
name of the second *was* Zillah. 20 And Adah
bore Jabal. He was the father of those who
dwell in tents and have livestock. 21 His
brother's name *was* Jubal. He was the
father of all those who play the harp and
flute. 22 And as for Zillah, she also bore
Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of
Tubal-Cain *was* Naamah.
23 Then Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech!
For I have killed a man for wounding me,
Even a young man for hurting me.
24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

His brother's name was Jubal.
He was the father of all those who
play the harp and flute.
GENESIS 4:21

A New Son

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and
she bore a son and named him Seth, "For
God has appointed another seed for me
instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." 26 And
as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and
he named him Enosh.[a] Then *men* began to
call on the name of the LORD.

The Family of Adam

5 This is the book of the genealogy of
Adam. In the day that God created
man, He made him in the likeness of God.
2 He created them male and female, and
blessed them and called them Mankind in
the day they were created. 3 And Adam lived
one hundred and thirty years, and begot *a*
son in his own likeness, after his image, and
named him Seth. 4 After he begot Seth, the
days of Adam were eight hundred years;
and he had sons and daughters. 5 So all the
days that Adam lived were nine hundred
and thirty years; and he died.
6 Seth lived one hundred and five years,
and begot Enosh. 7 After he begot Enosh,
Seth lived eight hundred and seven years,
and had sons and daughters. 8 So all the
days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve
years; and he died.
9 Enosh lived ninety years, and begot
Cainan.[a] 10 After he begot Cainan, Enosh
lived eight hundred and fifteen years, and
had sons and daughters. 11 So all the days of
Enosh were nine hundred and five years;
and he died.

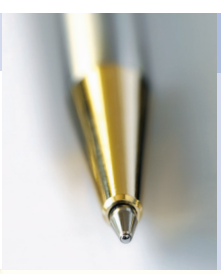
4:8 [a]Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate add *"Let us go out to the field."* **4:15** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Not so.*
4:26 [a]Greek *Enos* **5:9** [a]Hebrew *Qenan*

12 Cainan lived seventy years, and begot
Mahalalel. 13 After he begot Mahalalel,
Cainan lived eight hundred and forty
years, and had sons and daughters. 14 So all
the days of Cainan were nine hundred and
ten years; and he died.
15 Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and
begot Jared. 16 After he begot Jared, Mahalalel
lived eight hundred and thirty years, and
had sons and daughters. 17 So all the days of
Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-
five years; and he died.
18 Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two
years, and begot Enoch. 19 After he begot
Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years,
and had sons and daughters. 20 So all the
days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-
two years; and he died.
21 Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot
Methuselah. 22 After he begot Methuselah,
Enoch walked with God three hundred
years, and had sons and daughters. 23 So all
the days of Enoch were three hundred and
sixty-five years. 24 And Enoch walked with
God; and he *was* not, for God took him.
25 Methuselah lived one hundred and
eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech.
26 After he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived
seven hundred and eighty-two years, and
had sons and daughters. 27 So all the days
of Methuselah were nine hundred and
sixty-nine years; and he died.
28 Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-
two years, and had a son. 29 And he called his
name Noah, saying, "This *one* will comfort
us concerning our work and the toil of our
hands, because of the ground which the
LORD has cursed." 30 After he begot Noah,
Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five
years, and had sons and daughters. 31 So all
the days of Lamech were seven hundred
and seventy-seven years; and he died.
32 And Noah was five hundred years old,
and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The Wickedness and Judgment of Man

6 Now it came to pass, when men began
to multiply on the face of the earth, and
daughters were born to them, 2 that the
sons of God saw the daughters of men, that
they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for
themselves of all whom they chose.
3 And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not
strive[a] with man forever, for he *is* indeed
flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred
and twenty years." 4 There were giants on
the earth in those days, and also afterward,
when the sons of God came in to the
daughters of men and they bore *children* to
them. Those *were* the mighty men who *were*
of old, men of renown.

6:3 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *abide.*
6:5 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Vulgate reads *God;* Septuagint reads *LORD God.*



ED MILLER • Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine* Devotional Contributor

If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it. | GENESIS 4:7

I puzzled over the expression "sin lies at the door" for years, until I learned that the word translated "sin" could also be translated "sin offering." I believe the Lord was saying, "Cain, it is not too late. Even though your sin is of the deepest dye, provision for your sin is as close as the door. You do not have to perish. You can come to Me the same way your brother did—by the blood of the lamb." Rather than being a judgment, I believe it was a precious invitation to Cain.

5Then the LORD[a] saw that the wickedness
of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every
intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only
evil continually. 6And the LORD was sorry
that He had made man on the earth, and He
was grieved in His heart. 7So the LORD said,
"I will destroy man whom I have created
from the face of the earth, both man and
beast, creeping thing and birds of the air,
for I am sorry that I have made them." 8But
Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah Pleases God

9This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah
was a just man, perfect in his generations.
Noah walked with God. 10And Noah begot
three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
11The earth also was corrupt before
God, and the earth was filled with vio-
lence. 12So God looked upon the earth,
and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had
corrupted their way on the earth.

The Ark Prepared

13And God said to Noah, "The end of all
flesh has come before Me, for the earth is
filled with violence through them; and
behold, I will destroy them with the earth.
14Make yourself an ark of gopherwood;
make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside
and outside with pitch. 15And this is how
you shall make it: The length of the ark
shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty
cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16You
shall make a window for the ark, and you
shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set
the door of the ark in its side. You shall
make it *with* lower, second, and third *decks*.
17And behold, I Myself am bringing flood-
waters on the earth, to destroy from under
heaven all flesh in which *is* the breath of
life; everything that *is* on the earth shall
die. 18But I will establish My covenant with
you; and you shall go into the ark—you,
your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives
with you. 19And of every living thing of all
flesh you shall bring two of every *sort* into
the ark, to keep *them* alive with you; they
shall be male and female. 20Of the birds
after their kind, of animals after their kind,
and of every creeping thing of the earth
after its kind, two of every *kind* will come to
you to keep *them* alive. 21And you shall take
for yourself of all food that is eaten, and
you shall gather *it* to yourself; and it shall
be food for you and for them."
22Thus Noah did; according to all that
God commanded him, so he did.

The Great Flood

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into
the ark, you and all your household,
because I have seen *that* you *are* righteous
before Me in this generation. 2You shall
take with you seven each of every clean ani-
mal, a male and his female; two each of
animals that *are* unclean, a male and his
female; 3also seven each of birds of the air,
male and female, to keep the species alive
on the face of all the earth. 4For after seven
more days I will cause it to rain on the
earth forty days and forty nights, and I will
destroy from the face of the earth all living
things that I have made." 5And Noah did
according to all that the LORD commanded
him. 6Noah *was* six hundred years old when
the floodwaters were on the earth.
7So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his
sons' wives, went into the ark because of the
waters of the flood. 8Of clean animals, of
animals that *are* unclean, of birds, and of
everything that creeps on the earth, 9two by
two they went into the ark to Noah, male
and female, as God had commanded Noah.
10And it came to pass after seven days that
the waters of the flood were on the earth.
11In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in
the second month, the seventeenth day of
the month, on that day all the fountains of
the great deep were broken up, and the win-
dows of heaven were opened. 12And the rain
was on the earth forty days and forty nights.
13On the very same day Noah and Noah's
sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's
wife and the three wives of his sons with
them, entered the ark— 14they and every
beast after its kind, all cattle after their
kind, every creeping thing that creeps on
the earth after its kind, and every bird after
its kind, every bird of every sort. 15And they
went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all
flesh in which *is* the breath of life. 16So
those that entered, male and female of all
flesh, went in as God had commanded him;
and the LORD shut him in.
17Now the flood was on the earth forty

days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. 19And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. 20The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. 21And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. 22All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of the spirit[a] of life, all that *was* on the dry *land,* died. 23So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who *were* with him in the ark remained *alive.* 24And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature.

JOHN WESLEY

Noah's Deliverance

8 Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that *were* with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. 3And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. 4Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. 5And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month,* on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

6So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. 7Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. 8He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. 9But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. 10And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. 11Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf *was* in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. 12So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

13And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first *month,* the first *day* of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. 14And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

15Then God spoke to Noah, saying, 16"Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that *is* with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." 18So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, *and* whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

God's Covenant with Creation

20Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

22 "While the earth remains,

7:22 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate omit *of the spirit.*

Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Winter and summer,
And day and night
Shall not cease."

God's Promise to Noah

9 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.[a] 2And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. 3Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. 4But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is,* its blood. 5Surely for your life-blood I will demand *a reckoning;* from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man.

6 "Whoever sheds man's blood,
By man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God
He made man.
7 And as for you, be fruitful and multiply;
Bring forth abundantly in the earth
And multiply in it."

8Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: 9"And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants[a] after you, 10and with every living creature that *is* with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. 11Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12And God said: "This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: 13I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 14It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; 15and I will remember My covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth." 17And God said to Noah, "This *is* the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that *is* on the earth."

Noah and His Sons

18Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham *was* the father of Canaan. 19These three *were* the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

20And Noah began *to be* a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. 21Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. 22And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid *it* on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces *were* turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

24So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. 25Then he said:

"Cursed *be* Canaan;
A servant of servants
He shall be to his brethren."
26 And he said:
"Blessed *be* the LORD,
The God of Shem,
And may Canaan be his servant.
27 May God enlarge Japheth,
And may he dwell in the tents of Shem;
And may Canaan be his servant."

28And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. 29So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

9:1 [a]Compare Genesis 1:28 **9:9** [a]Literally *seed*



Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.

GENESIS 8:1

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.

HEBREWS 6:19

"All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. . . . Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive" (Gen. 7:22, 23). They had been spared, but things were looking pretty bleak for Noah and his family. They had weathered the worst storm in the history (and future) of the universe and spent forty days trapped inside a boat with hundreds of animals. When would the rain ever stop? When would the sun ever come out? When would their waiting ever end?

"Then God remembered Noah." And like a breath of fresh air, "God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided" (8:1). Noah and his family had to wait nearly a year longer to finally emerge from the ark onto dry land, but in all that time, sending out his birds, waiting expectantly for a sign, Noah did not lose faith. The writer of Hebrews, who defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," lists Noah in the Hall of Faith. "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Heb. 11:1, 7). Noah believed God for what he could not see and his hope was not disappointed.

This is the same hope that Septimus Winner wrote about in his song, "Whispering Hope." Septimus Winner, who used the pseudonym Alice Hawthorne, wrote hundreds of songs in his lifetime, including "O Where, O Where Has My Little Dog Gone?" and "Listen to the Mockingbird." When he wrote and published "Give Us Back Our Old Commander: Little Mac, the People's Pride" as an objection to President Lincoln's firing of General George B. McLellan in 1862, he was charged with treason, a capital offense. He was granted a reprieve when he agreed to destroy all copies of the song.

Of all the thousands of songs Winner composed and arranged over the course of his life, none has been more popular or enduring than "Whispering Hope." It is no wonder. For anyone who believes in Christ knows "thou blest hope of glory," the hope that does not disappoint (Rom. 5:5).

Whispering Hope

Septimus Winner (aka Alice Hawthorne) | 1868

Soft as the voice of an angel,
Breathing a lesson unheard,
Hope with a gentle persuasion
Whispers her comforting word:
Wait till the darkness is over,
Wait till the tempest is done,
Hope for the sunshine tomorrow,
After the shower is gone.

Refrain:

Whispering hope, oh how welcome thy voice,
Making my heart in its sorrow rejoice.

If, in the dusk of the twilight,
Dim be the region afar,
Will not the deepening darkness
Brighten the glimmering star?
Then when the night is upon us,
Why should the heart sink away?
When the dark midnight is over,
Watch for the breaking of day.

Refrain

Hope, as an anchor so steadfast,
Rends the dark veil for the soul,
Whither the Master has entered,
Robbing the grave of its goal.
Come then, O come, glad fruition,
Come to my sad weary heart;
Come, O Thou blest hope of glory,
Never, O never depart.

Refrain

Nations Descended from Noah

10 Now this *is* the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And sons were born to them after the flood.

[2]The sons of Japheth *were* Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. [3]The sons of Gomer *were* Ashkenaz, Riphath,[a] and Togarmah. [4]The sons of Javan *were* Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.[a] [5]From these the coastland *peoples* of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

[6]The sons of Ham *were* Cush, Mizraim, Put,[a] and Canaan. [7]The sons of Cush *were* Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah *were* Sheba and Dedan.

[8]Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. [9]He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." [10]And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. [11]From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, [12]and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that *is* the principal city).

[13]Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, [14]Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim).

[15]Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth; [16]the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; [17]the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; [18]the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. [19]And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. [20]These *were* the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands *and* in their nations.

[21]And *children* were born also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder. [22]The sons of Shem *were* Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. [23]The sons of Aram *were* Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.[a] [24]Arphaxad begot Salah,[a] and Salah begot Eber. [25]To Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan. [26]Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, [27]Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, [28]Obal,[a] Abimael, Sheba, [29]Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan. [30]And their dwelling place was from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. [31]These *were* the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations.

[32]These *were* the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. [2]And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. [3]Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. [4]And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

[5]But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. [6]And the LORD said, "Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. [7]Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." [8]So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. [9]Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

10:3 [a]Spelled *Diphath* in 1 Chronicles 1:6 **10:4** [a]Spelled *Rodanim* in Samaritan Pentateuch and 1 Chronicles 1:7 **10:6** [a]Or *Phut* **10:23** [a]Called *Meshech* in Septuagint and 1 Chronicles 1:17 **10:24** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Vulgate, and Targum; Septuagint reads *Arphaxad begot Cainan, and Cainan begot Salah* (compare Luke 3:35, 36). **10:28** [a]Spelled *Ebal* in 1 Chronicles 1:22

Shem's Descendants

10 This *is* the genealogy of Shem: Shem
was one hundred years old, and begot
Arphaxad two years after the flood. 11 After
he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hun-
dred years, and begot sons and daughters.
12 Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and
begot Salah. 13 After he begot Salah,
Arphaxad lived four hundred and three
years, and begot sons and daughters.
14 Salah lived thirty years, and begot
Eber. 15 After he begot Eber, Salah lived
four hundred and three years, and begot
sons and daughters.
16 Eber lived thirty-four years, and begot
Peleg. 17 After he begot Peleg, Eber lived
four hundred and thirty years, and begot
sons and daughters.
18 Peleg lived thirty years, and begot
Reu. 19 After he begot Reu, Peleg lived two
hundred and nine years, and begot sons
and daughters.
20 Reu lived thirty-two years, and begot
Serug. 21 After he begot Serug, Reu lived
two hundred and seven years, and begot
sons and daughters.
22 Serug lived thirty years, and begot
Nahor. 23 After he begot Nahor, Serug lived
two hundred years, and begot sons and
daughters.
24 Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and
begot Terah. 25 After he begot Terah, Nahor
lived one hundred and nineteen years, and
begot sons and daughters.
26 Now Terah lived seventy years, and
begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Terah's Descendants

27 This *is* the genealogy of Terah: Terah
begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran
begot Lot. 28 And Haran died before his
father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the
Chaldeans. 29 Then Abram and Nahor took
wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* Sarai,
and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the
daughter of Haran the father of Milcah
and the father of Iscah. 30 But Sarai was
barren; she had no child.
31 And Terah took his son Abram and his
grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his
daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife,
and they went out with them from Ur of the
Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and
they came to Haran and dwelt there. 32 So
the days of Terah were two hundred and
five years, and Terah died in Haran.

Promises to Abram

12 Now the LORD had said to Abram:

"Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.
2 I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth
shall be blessed."

4 So Abram departed as the LORD had
spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And
Abram *was* seventy-five years old when he
departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took
Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son,
and all their possessions that they had
gathered, and the people whom they had
acquired in Haran, and they departed to
go to the land of Canaan. So they came to
the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed
through the land to the place of Shechem,
as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh.[a] And
the Canaanites *were* then in the land.
7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and
said, "To your descendants I will give this
land." And there he built an altar to the
LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 And he
moved from there to the mountain east of
Bethel, and he pitched his tent *with* Bethel
on the west and Ai on the east; there he
built an altar to the LORD and called on the
name of the LORD. 9 So Abram journeyed,
going on still toward the South.[a]

Abram in Egypt

10 Now there was a famine in the land,
and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell
there, for the famine *was* severe in the land.
11 And it came to pass, when he was close to
entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his
wife, "Indeed I know that you *are* a woman

12:6 [a]Hebrew *Alon Moreh* **12:9** [a]Hebrew *Negev*

of beautiful countenance. 12Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This *is* his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13Please say you *are* my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I[a] may live because of you."

14So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she *was* very beautiful. 15The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

17But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What *is* this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she *was* your wife? 19Why did you say, 'She *is* my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take *her* and go your way." 20So Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

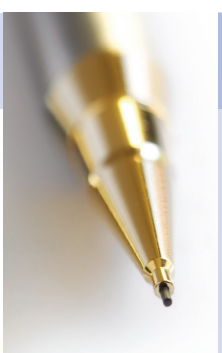
Abram Inherits Canaan

13 Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South.[a] 2Abram *was* very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 3And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

5Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. 6Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.

8So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we *are* brethren. 9*Is* not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If *you*

12:13 [a]Literally *my soul* **13:1** [a]Hebrew *Negev*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'" | GENESIS 14:21–23

It was a great blessing to my heart to see how timely the visit of Melchizedek was to Abraham. He appeared just before the king of Sodom arrived with the temptation to be enriched by this world's vanity. Melchizedek provided Abraham with everything he would need to resist the temptation. Melchizedek pointed him to the true victor, told him how rich he was being identified with the Possessor of Heaven and Earth, refreshed him with food and drink, and received from him the spoils of the enemy. My High Priest, the Lord Jesus, is ever meeting me in the nick of time, providing exactly what I need when I need it to be victorious.

take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if *you go* to the right, then I will go to the left."

10And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched *his* tent even as far as Sodom. 13But the men of Sodom *were* exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

14And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants[a] forever. 16And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered. 17Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

18Then Abram moved *his* tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre,[a] which *are* in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

Lot's Captivity and Rescue

14 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations,[a] 2*that* they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). 3All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). 4Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that *were* with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which *is* by the wilderness. 7Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that *is,* Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar.

8And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that *is,* Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim 9against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations,[a] Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. 10Now the Valley of Siddim *was full of* asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; *some* fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. 11Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

13Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre[a] the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they *were* allies with Abram. 14Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained *servants* who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which *is* north of Damascus. 16So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.

17And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that *is,* the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who *were* with him.

Abram and Melchizedek

18Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he *was* the priest of God Most High. 19And he blessed him and said:

"Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;

13:15 [a]Literally *seed,* and so throughout the book **13:18** [a]Hebrew *Alon Mamre* **14:1** [a]Hebrew *goyim* **14:9** [a]Hebrew *goyim* **14:13** [a]Hebrew *Alon Mamre*

20 And blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your enemies into
your hand."

And he gave him a tithe of all.

21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I *will take* nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that *is* yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'— 24 except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

God's Covenant with Abram

15 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

2 But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"

4 And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

7 Then He said to him, "I *am* the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

8 And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.

11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete."

17 And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. 18 On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying:

"To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— 19 the Kenites, the Kenezzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

Hagar and Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no *children.* And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing *children.* Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. 3 Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. 4 So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.

5 Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong *be* upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me."

6 So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your

maid *is* in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

7Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. 8And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

9The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." 10Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." 11And the Angel of the LORD said to her:

"Behold, you *are* with child,
And you shall bear a son.
You shall call his name Ishmael,
Because the LORD has heard your affliction.
12 He shall be a wild man;
His hand *shall be* against every man,
And every man's hand against him.
And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

13Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" 14Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi;[a] observe, *it is* between Kadesh and Bered.

15So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. 16Abram *was* eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

The Sign of the Covenant

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I *am* Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." 3Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. 6I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. 7And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. 8Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

9And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. 13He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

15Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall be* her name. 16And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother of* nations; kings of peoples shall be from her."

17Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall *a child* be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear *a child?*" 18And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"

19Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his descendants after him. 20And as

16:14 [a]Literally *Well of the One Who Lives and Sees Me*

for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." 22Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

23So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. 24Abraham *was* ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; 27and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

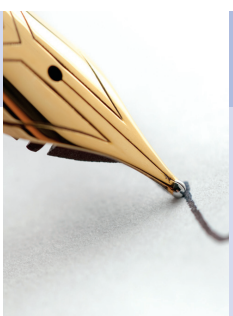
The Son of Promise

18 Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre,[a] as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw *them,* he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant."

They said, "Do as you have said."

6So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead *it* and make cakes." 7And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave *it* to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8So he

18:1 [a]Hebrew *Alon Mamre*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. | GENESIS 19:16

As my wife and I were discussing this passage I raised the question, "Do you think Lot's wife was saved?" Without a moment's hesitation she answered, "Indeed! There is no doubt about it!" "What makes you so certain?" I asked. She told me she was confident because the angels who minister to the heirs of salvation were ministering to her. They took her by the hand; therefore she must have been an heir of salvation. Well, I had never connected those two passages before, and I thought I had learned much of Lot's wife that day. I was to learn even more when my wife spoke again. "It is good that the Lord in His mercy turned her into a pillar of salt. If He hadn't done that, she probably would have died without any ministry at all. God gave her a ministry of warning. I wouldn't be surprised," she said, "if she has not met many in heaven who were blessed by her ministry of warning." Amazing grace!

took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

9 Then they said to him, "Where *is* Sarah your wife?"

So he said, "Here, in the tent."

10 And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son."

(Sarah was listening in the tent door which *was* behind him.) 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; *and* Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.[a] 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

13 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear *a child,* since I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

15 But Sarah denied *it,* saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid.

And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom

16 Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. 17 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18 since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." 20 And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."

22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. 23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare *it* for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25 Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

26 So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

27 Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who *am but* dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: 28 Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for *lack of* five?"

So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it*."

29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?"

So He said, "I will not do *it* for the sake of forty."

30 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not do *it* if I find thirty there."

31 And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of twenty."

32 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?"

And He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of ten." 33 So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

Sodom's Depravity

19 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw *them,* he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. 2 And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way."

And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square."

18:11 [a]Literally *the manner of women had ceased to be with Sarah*

3But he insisted strongly; so they
turned in to him and entered his house.
Then he made them a feast, and baked
unleavened bread, and they ate.
4Now before they lay down, the men of
the city, the men of Sodom, both old and
young, all the people from every quarter,
surrounded the house. 5And they called to
Lot and said to him, "Where are the men
who came to you tonight? Bring them out
to us that we may know them *carnally.*"
6So Lot went out to them through the
doorway, shut the door behind him, 7and
said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so
wickedly! 8See now, I have two daughters
who have not known a man; please, let me
bring them out to you, and you may do to
them as you wish; only do nothing to these
men, since this is the reason they have
come under the shadow of my roof."
9And they said, "Stand back!" Then they
said, "This one came in to stay *here,* and he
keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal
worse with you than with them." So they
pressed hard against the man Lot, and
came near to break down the door. 10But
the men reached out their hands and
pulled Lot into the house with them, and
shut the door. 11And they struck the men
who *were* at the doorway of the house with
blindness, both small and great, so that
they became weary *trying* to find the door.

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

12Then the men said to Lot, "Have you
anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons,
your daughters, and whomever you have in
the city—take *them* out of this place! 13For
we will destroy this place, because the out-
cry against them has grown great before
the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent
us to destroy it."
14So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-
in-law, who had married his daughters,
and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for
the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his
sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.
15When the morning dawned, the angels
urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your
wife and your two daughters who are here,
lest you be consumed in the punishment of
the city." 16And while he lingered, the men
took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and
the hands of his two daughters, the LORD
being merciful to him, and they brought
him out and set him outside the city. 17So it
came to pass, when they had brought them
outside, that he[a] said, "Escape for your life!
Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere
in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest
you be destroyed."
18Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my
lords! 19Indeed now, your servant has found
favor in your sight, and you have increased
your mercy which you have shown me by
saving my life; but I cannot escape to the
mountains, lest some evil overtake me and
I die. 20See now, this city *is* near *enough* to
flee to, and it *is* a little one; please let me
escape there (*is* it not a little one?) and my
soul shall live."
21And he said to him, "See, I have favored
you concerning this thing also, in that I will
not overthrow this city for which you have
spoken. 22Hurry, escape there. For I cannot
do anything until you arrive there."
Therefore the name of the city was
called Zoar.
23The sun had risen upon the earth
when Lot entered Zoar. 24Then the LORD
rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and
Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heav-
ens. 25So He overthrew those cities, all the
plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and
what grew on the ground.
26But his wife looked back behind him,
and she became a pillar of salt.
27And Abraham went early in the morn-
ing to the place where he had stood before
the LORD. 28Then he looked toward Sodom
and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of
the plain; and he saw, and behold, the
smoke of the land which went up like the
smoke of a furnace. 29And it came to pass,
when God destroyed the cities of the plain,
that God remembered Abraham, and sent
Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when
He overthrew the cities in which Lot had
dwelt.

The Descendants of Lot

30Then Lot went up out of Zoar and
dwelt in the mountains, and his two daugh-
ters were with him; for he was afraid to
dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daugh-

19:17 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *they.*

ters dwelt in a cave. [31]Now the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father *is* old, and *there is* no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. [32]Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." [33]So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

[34]It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in *and* lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." [35]Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

[36]Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. [37]The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he *is* the father of the Moabites to this day. [38]And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he *is* the father of the people of Ammon to this day.

Abraham and Abimelech

20 And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. [2]Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She *is* my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

[3]But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you *are* a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she *is* a man's wife."

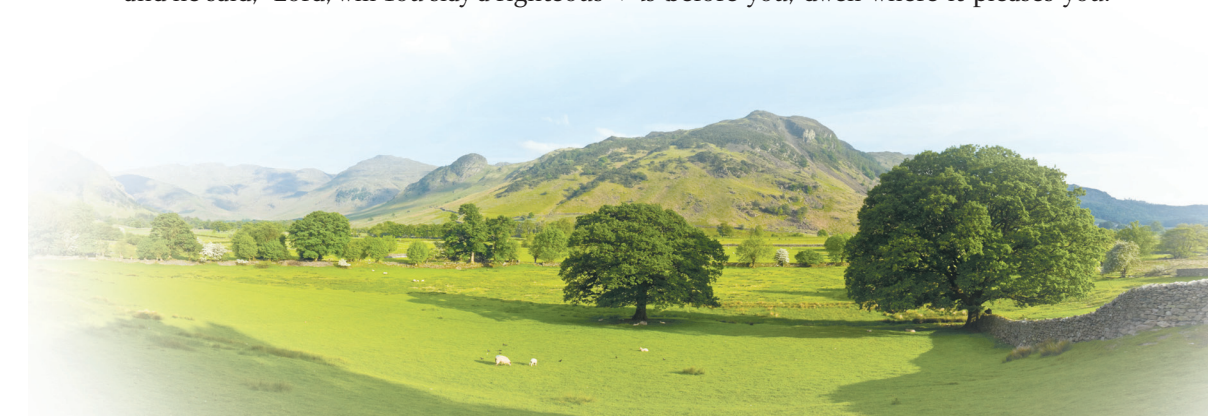
[4]But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? [5]Did he not say to me, 'She *is* my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He *is* my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this."

[6]And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. [7]Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore *her,* know that you shall surely die, you and all who *are* yours."

[8]So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. [9]And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done." [10]Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?"

[11]And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. [12]But indeed *she is* truly my sister. She *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. [13]And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This *is* your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He *is* my brother." '"

[14]Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave *them* to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. [15]And Abimelech said, "See, my land *is* before you; dwell where it pleases you."



16 Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have
given your brother a thousand *pieces* of sil-
ver; indeed this vindicates you[a] before all
who *are* with you and before everybody."
Thus she was rebuked.
17 So Abraham prayed to God; and God
healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female
servants. Then they bore *children;* 18 for the
LORD had closed up all the wombs of the
house of Abimelech because of Sarah,
Abraham's wife.

Isaac Is Born

21 And the LORD visited Sarah as He
had said, and the LORD did for Sarah
as He had spoken. 2 For Sarah conceived
and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at
the set time of which God had spoken to
him. 3 And Abraham called the name of his
son who was born to him—whom Sarah
bore to him—Isaac. 4 Then Abraham cir-
cumcised his son Isaac when he was eight
days old, as God had commanded him.
5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old
when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And
Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, *and*
all who hear will laugh with me." 7 She also
said, "Who would have said to Abraham
that Sarah would nurse children? For I
have borne *him* a son in his old age."

Hagar and Ishmael Depart

8 So the child grew and was weaned.
And Abraham made a great feast on the
same day that Isaac was weaned.
9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the
Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham,
scoffing. 10 Therefore she said to Abraham,
"Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for
the son of this bondwoman shall not be
heir with my son, *namely* with Isaac." 11 And
the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's
sight because of his son.
12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it
be displeasing in your sight because of the
lad or because of your bondwoman.
Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her
voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.
13 Yet I will also make a nation of the son of
the bondwoman, because he *is* your seed."
14 So Abraham rose early in the morning,

20:16 [a]Literally *it is a covering of the eyes for you*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. | GENESIS 22:13

I think every Christian has identified with Abraham's great test, thinking, "What a test! I can't imagine how I would fare if the Lord called me to such a test. It must have been so difficult for Abraham to climb that mountain in believing obedience to the Lord." Indeed! A wonderful miracle was also happening on the blind side of the mountain. By the providence of the Lord, an old ram was making its way up one side of the mountain, while Abraham and Isaac were climbing up the other side. They were to meet at the top. When Abraham had everything laid out on the altar before the Lord, the Lord opened his eyes to the thorn-crowned ram in the thicket. How awesome that the Lord has His provision always coming up the blind side of the mountain.

and took bread and a skin of water; and putting *it* on her shoulder, he gave *it* and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. 15And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. 16Then she went and sat down across from *him* at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite *him,* and lifted her voice and wept.

17And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he *is.* 18Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

19Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. 20So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

A Covenant with Abimelech

22And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God *is* with you in all that you do. 23Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt."

24And Abraham said, "I will swear."

25Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized. 26And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard *of it* until today." 27So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. 28And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

29Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What *is the meaning of* these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?"

30And he said, "You will take *these* seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well." 31Therefore he called that place Beersheba,[a] because the two of them swore an oath there.

32Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. So Abimelech rose with Phichol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines. 33Then *Abraham* planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. 34And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days.

Abraham's Faith Confirmed

22 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am."

2Then He said, "Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

3So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad[a] and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

6So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid *it* on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"

And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

9Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on

21:31 [a]Literally *Well of the Oath* or *Well of the Seven* **22:5** [a]Or *young man*

the altar, upon the wood. 10And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

11But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

So he said, "Here I am."

12And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son,* from Me."

13Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him was* a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide;[a] as it is said *to* this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

15Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*—17blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." 19So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

The Family of Nahor

20Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: 21Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, 22Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." 23And Bethuel begot Rebekah.[a] These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.

Sarah's Death and Burial

23 Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; *these were* the years of the life of Sarah. 2So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that *is,* Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

3Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, 4"I *am* a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

5And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, 6"Hear us, my lord: You *are* a a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead."

7Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. 8And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, 9that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which *is* at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you."

10Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying, 11"No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that *is* in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!"

12Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; 13and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you *will give it,* please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take *it* from me and I will bury my dead there."

14And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, 15"My lord, listen to me; the land *is worth* four hundred shekels of silver. What *is* that between you and me? So bury your dead." 16And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.

17So the field of Ephron which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the

22:14 [a]Hebrew *YHWH Yireh* **22:23** [a]Spelled *Rebecca* in Romans 9:10

field and the cave which *was* in it, and all the trees that *were* in the field, which *were* within all the surrounding borders, were deeded [18]to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

[19]And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that *is,* Hebron) in the land of Canaan. [20]So the field and the cave that *is* in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

A Bride for Isaac

24 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. [2]So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, [3]and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; [4]but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

[5]And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?"

[6]But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there. [7]The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants[a] I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. [8]And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." [9]So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

[10]Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods *were in* his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. [11]And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw *water.* [12]Then he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. [13]Behold, *here* I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. [14]Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'—*let* her *be the one* You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."

[15]And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. [16]Now the young woman *was* very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. [17]And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher."

[18]So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. [19]And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw *water* for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." [20]Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw *water,* and drew for all his camels. [21]And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

[22]So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten *shekels* of gold, [23]and said, "Whose daughter *are* you? Tell me, please, is there room *in* your father's house for us to lodge?"

[24]So she said to him, "I *am* the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to Nahor." [25]Moreover she said to him, "We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge."

[26]Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the LORD. [27]And he said, "Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me,

24:7 [a]Literally *seed*

being on the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren." [28]So the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things.

[29]Now Rebekah had a brother whose name *was* Laban, and Laban ran out to the man by the well. [30]So it came to pass, when he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, "Thus the man spoke to me," that he went to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well. [31]And he said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels."

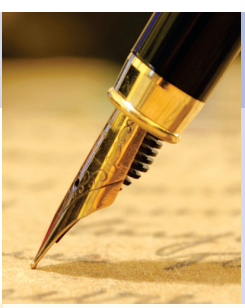
[32]Then the man came to the house. And he unloaded the camels, and provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who *were* with him. [33]*Food* was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told about my errand."

And he said, "Speak on."

[34]So he said, "I *am* Abraham's servant. [35]The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. [36]And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to him he has given all that he has. [37]Now my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; [38]but you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.' [39]And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' [40]But he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. [41]You will be clear from this oath when you arrive among my family; for if they will not give *her* to you, then you will be released from my oath.'

[42]"And this day I came to the well and said, 'O LORD God of my master Abraham, if You will now prosper the way in which I go, [43]behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the virgin comes out to draw *water,* and I say to her, "Please give me a little water from your pitcher to drink," [44]and she says to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,"—*let* her *be* the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.'

[45]"But before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger." | GENESIS 25:23

I shall never forget the day my wife encouraged my heart with the verse "the older shall serve the younger." I was moaning over the indwelling sin in my life and grieving that deliverance was not at hand. She reminded me that the elder would serve the younger some day. When I asked her what she meant by that she said, "You were born naturally in 1943. That is the elder. You were born again in 1958. That is the younger. Someday the natural will serve the spiritual." That was dew from heaven to my burdened soul.

with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew *water.* And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' [46]And she made haste and let her pitcher down from her *shoulder,* and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels a drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels a drink also. [47]Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter *are* you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. [48]And I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. [49]Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

[50]Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. [51]Here *is* Rebekah before you; take *her* and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken."

[52]And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the earth. [53]Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave *them* to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.

[54]And he and the men who *were* with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master."

[55]But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us *a few* days, at least ten; after that she may go."

[56]And he said to them, "Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master."

[57]So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." [58]Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?"

And she said, "I will go."

[59]So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. [60]And they blessed Rebekah and said to her:

"Our sister, *may* you *become*
The mother of thousands of ten
thousands;
And may your descendants possess
The gates of those who hate them."

[61]Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.

[62]Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. [63]And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels *were* coming. [64]Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; [65]for she had said to the servant, "Who *is* this man walking in the field to meet us?"

The servant said, "It *is* my master." So she took a veil and covered herself.

[66]And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. [67]Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's *death.*

Abraham and Keturah

25 Abraham again took a wife, and her name *was* Keturah. [2]And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. [3]Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. [4]And the sons of Midian *were* Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these *were* the children of Keturah.

[5]And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. [6]But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

Abraham's Death and Burial

[7]This *is* the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. [8]Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full *of years,* and was gathered to his people. [9]And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of

Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, [10]the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife. [11]And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi.

The Families of Ishmael and Isaac

[12]Now this *is* the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham. [13]And these *were* the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, [14]Mishma, Dumah, Massa, [15]Hadar,[a] Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. [16]These *were* the sons of Ishmael and these *were* their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations. [17]These *were* the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. [18](They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which *is* east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He died in the presence of all his brethren.

[19]This *is* the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. [20]Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. [21]Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she *was* barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. [22]But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If *all is* well, why *am I like* this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

[23]And the LORD said to her:

"Two nations *are* in your womb,
Two peoples shall be separated from your body;
One people shall be stronger than the other,
And the older shall serve the younger."

[24]So when her days were fulfilled *for her* to give birth, indeed *there were* twins in her womb. [25]And the first came out red. *He was* like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.[a] [26]Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob.[a] Isaac *was* sixty years old when she bore them.

[27]So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. [28]And Isaac loved Esau because he ate *of his* game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Esau Sells His Birthright

[29]Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he *was* weary. [30]And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red *stew,* for I *am* weary." Therefore his name was called Edom.[a]

[31]But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."

[32]And Esau said, "Look, I *am* about to die; so what *is* this birthright to me?"

[33]Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day."

So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. [34]And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised *his* birthright.

Isaac and Abimelech

26 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar.

[2]Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. [3]Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. [4]And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; [5]because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

[6]So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. [7]And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She *is* my sister"; for he was afraid to

25:15 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Hadad.* **25:25** [a]Literally *Hairy*
25:26 [a]Literally *Supplanter* **25:30** [a]Literally *Red*

say, "*She is* my wife," *because he thought,* "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she *is* beautiful to behold." [8]Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. [9]Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she *is* your wife; so how could you say, 'She *is* my sister'?"

Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.'"

[10]And Abimelech said, "What *is* this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us." [11]So Abimelech charged all *his* people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

[12]Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. [13]The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; [14]for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him. [15]Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. [16]And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

[17]Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. [18]And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.

[19]Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. [20]But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water *is* ours." So he called the name of the well Esek,[a] because they quarreled with him. [21]Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that *one* also. So he called its name Sitnah.[a] [22]And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth,[a] because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

[23]Then he went up from there to Beersheba. [24]And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I *am* the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I *am* with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." [25]So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

[26]Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. [27]And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?"

[28]But they said, "We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, [29]that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You *are* now the blessed of the LORD.'"

[30]So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. [31]Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

[32]It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." [33]So he called it Shebah.[a] Therefore the name of the city *is* Beersheba[b] to this day.

[34]When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. [35]And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

Isaac Blesses Jacob

27 Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son."

26:20 [a]Literally *Quarrel* **26:21** [a]Literally *Enmity* **26:22** [a]Literally *Spaciousness* **26:33** [a]Literally *Oath* or *Seven* [b]Literally *Well of the Oath* or *Well of the Seven*

And he answered him, "Here I am."
2Then he said, "Behold now, I am old.
I do not know the day of my death. 3Now
therefore, please take your weapons, your
quiver and your bow, and go out to the
field and hunt game for me. 4And make me
savory food, such as I love, and bring *it* to
me that I may eat, that my soul may bless
you before I die."
5Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac
spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to
the field to hunt game and to bring *it*. 6So
Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying,
"Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau
your brother, saying, 7'Bring me game and
make savory food for me, that I may eat it
and bless you in the presence of the LORD
before my death.' 8Now therefore, my son,
obey my voice according to what I command
you. 9Go now to the flock and bring me from
there two choice kids of the goats, and I will
make savory food from them for your father,
such as he loves. 10Then you shall take *it* to
your father, that he may eat *it,* and that he
may bless you before his death."
11And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother,
"Look, Esau my brother *is* a hairy man, and
I *am* a smooth-*skinned* man. 12Perhaps my
father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a
deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse
on myself and not a blessing."
13But his mother said to him, "*Let* your
curse *be* on me, my son; only obey my
voice, and go, get *them* for me." 14And he
went and got *them* and brought *them* to his
mother, and his mother made savory food,
such as his father loved. 15Then Rebekah
took the choice clothes of her elder son
Esau, which *were* with her in the house, and
put them on Jacob her younger son. 16And
she put the skins of the kids of the goats
on his hands and on the smooth part of his
neck. 17Then she gave the savory food and
the bread, which she had prepared, into
the hand of her son Jacob.
18So he went to his father and said, "My
father."
And he said, "Here I am. Who *are* you,
my son?"
19Jacob said to his father, "I *am* Esau
your firstborn; I have done just as you told
me; please arise, sit and eat of my game,
that your soul may bless me."
20But Isaac said to his son, "How *is it*
that you have found *it* so quickly, my son?"
And he said, "Because the LORD your
God brought *it* to me."
21Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near,
that I may feel you, my son, whether you *are*
really my son Esau or not." 22So Jacob went
near to Isaac his father, and he felt him
and said, "The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but
the hands *are* the hands of Esau." 23And he
did not recognize him, because his hands
were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so
he blessed him.
24Then he said, "*Are* you really my son
Esau?"
He said, "I *am.*"
25He said, "Bring *it* near to me, and I
will eat of my son's game, so that my soul
may bless you." So he brought *it* near to
him, and he ate; and he brought him wine,
and he drank. 26Then his father Isaac said
to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my
son." 27And he came near and kissed him;
and he smelled the smell of his clothing,
and blessed him and said:

"Surely, the smell of my son
Is like the smell of a field
Which the LORD has blessed.
28 Therefore may God give you
Of the dew of heaven,
Of the fatness of the earth,
And plenty of grain and wine.
29 Let peoples serve you,
And nations bow down to you.
Be master over your brethren,
And let your mother's sons bow down
to you.
Cursed *be* everyone who curses you,
And blessed *be* those who bless you!"

Esau's Lost Hope

30Now it happened, as soon as Isaac
had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob
had scarcely gone out from the presence
of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother
came in from his hunting. 31He also had
made savory food, and brought it to his
father, and said to his father, "Let my
father arise and eat of his son's game, that
your soul may bless me."
32And his father Isaac said to him, "Who
are you?"

So he said, "I *am* your son, your firstborn, Esau."
33Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where *is* the one who hunted game and brought *it* to me? I ate all *of it* before you came, and I have blessed him—*and* indeed he shall be blessed."
34When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me—me also, O my father!"
35But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing."
36And *Esau* said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"
37Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"
38And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.
39Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

"Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,
And of the dew of heaven from above.
40 By your sword you shall live,
And you shall serve your brother;
And it shall come to pass, when you become restless,
That you shall break his yoke from your neck."

Jacob Escapes from Esau

41So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."
42And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you *by intending* to kill you. 43Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. 44And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away, 45until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"
46And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these *who are* the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

28 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 2Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

3 "May God Almighty bless you,
And make you fruitful and multiply you,
That you may be an assembly of peoples;
4 And give you the blessing of Abraham,
To you and your descendants with you,
That you may inherit the land
In which you are a stranger,
Which God gave to Abraham."

5So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Esau Marries Mahalath

6Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, *and that* as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," 7and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. 8Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. 9So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

Jacob's Vow at Bethel

10 Now Jacob went out from Beersheba
and went toward Haran. 11 So he came to
a certain place and stayed there all night,
because the sun had set. And he took one
of the stones of that place and put it at
his head, and he lay down in that place to
sleep. 12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a
ladder *was* set up on the earth, and its top
reached to heaven; and there the angels of
God were ascending and descending on it.
13 And behold, the LORD stood above it
and said: "I *am* the LORD God of Abraham
your father and the God of Isaac; the land
on which you lie I will give to you and your
descendants. 14 Also your descendants shall
be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread
abroad to the west and the east, to the north
and the south; and in you and in your seed
all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
15 Behold, I *am* with you and will keep you
wherever you go, and will bring you back to
this land; for I will not leave you until I have
done what I have spoken to you."
16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and
said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and
I did not know *it*." 17 And he was afraid and
said, "How awesome *is* this place! This *is*
none other than the house of God, and
this *is* the gate of heaven!"
18 Then Jacob rose early in the morn-
ing, and took the stone that he had put at
his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured
oil on top of it. 19 And he called the name
of that place Bethel;[a] but the name of that
city had been Luz previously. 20 Then Jacob
made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me,
and keep me in this way that I am going,
and give me bread to eat and clothing to
put on, 21 so that I come back to my father's
house in peace, then the LORD shall be my
God. 22 And this stone which I have set as a
pillar shall be God's house, and of all that
You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Jacob Meets Rachel

29 So Jacob went on his journey and
came to the land of the people of
the East. 2 And he looked, and saw a well
in the field; and behold, there *were* three
flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that
well they watered the flocks. A large stone
was on the well's mouth. 3 Now all the flocks
would be gathered there; and they would
roll the stone from the well's mouth, water
the sheep, and put the stone back in its
place on the well's mouth.
4 And Jacob said to them, "My brethren,
where *are* you from?"
And they said, "We *are* from Haran."
5 Then he said to them, "Do you know
Laban the son of Nahor?"
And they said, "We know him."
6 So he said to them, "Is he well?"
And they said, "*He is* well. And look,
his daughter Rachel is coming with the
sheep."
7 Then he said, "Look, *it is* still high day;
it is not time for the cattle to be gathered
together. Water the sheep, and go and feed
them."
8 But they said, "We cannot until all the
flocks are gathered together, and they have
rolled the stone from the well's mouth;
then we water the sheep."
9 Now while he was still speaking with
them, Rachel came with her father's sheep,
for she was a shepherdess. 10 And it came
to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daugh-
ter of Laban his mother's brother, and the
sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that
Jacob went near and rolled the stone from
the well's mouth, and watered the flock of
Laban his mother's brother. 11 Then Jacob
kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and
wept. 12 And Jacob told Rachel that he
was her father's relative and that he *was*
Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her
father.
13 Then it came to pass, when Laban
heard the report about Jacob his sister's
son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced
him and kissed him, and brought him to his
house. So he told Laban all these things.
14 And Laban said to him, "Surely you *are*
my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with
him for a month.

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because
you *are* my relative, should you therefore
serve me for nothing? Tell me, what *should*
your wages *be*?" 16 Now Laban had two
daughters: the name of the elder *was* Leah,

28:19 [a]Literally *House of God*

This Day

GLORIA GAITHER

There is beauty in the morning
With the sun tip-toeing in,
When the day's a brand new conscience,
And the world's a chance to win.

There is muscle in the noontime
When the sun is plowing through,
Hot and bright and clear and brawny,
Nature's time to go and do.

There's a charm about the evening—
Gentle, loving like a friend,
Smiling o'er the west horizon,
Tying up the day's loose ends.

Lovely, complicated wrappings
Sheathe the gift of one-day-more;
Breathless, I untie the package—
Never lived *this* day before!

and the name of the younger *was* Rachel. 17Leah's eyes *were* delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.

18Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."

19And Laban said, "*It is* better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me." 20So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed *only* a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

21Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give *me* my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." 22And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. 23Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. 24And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah *as* a maid. 25So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it *was* Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?"

26And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. 27Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years."

28Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. 29And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. 30Then *Jacob* also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.

The Children of Jacob

31When the LORD saw that Leah *was* unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel *was* barren. 32So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben;[a] for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." 33Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I *am* unloved, He has therefore given me this *son* also." And she called his name Simeon.[a] 34She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi.[a] 35And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah.[a] Then she stopped bearing.

30 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!"

2And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "*Am* I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

3So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear *a child* on my knees, that I also may have children by her." 4Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. 5And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan.[a] 7And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8Then Rachel said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, *and* indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.[a]

9When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. 10And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11Then Leah said, "A troop comes!"[a] So she called his name Gad.[b] 12And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher.[a]

14Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me *some* of your son's mandrakes."

15But she said to her, "*Is it* a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?"

And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes."

16When Jacob came out of the field in

29:32 [a]Literally *See, a Son* **29:33** [a]Literally *Heard* **29:34** [a]Literally *Attached* **29:35** [a]Literally *Praise* **30:6** [a]Literally *Judge* **30:8** [a]Literally *My Wrestling* **30:11** [a]Following Qere, Syriac, and Targum; Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *in fortune.* [b]Literally *Troop* or *Fortune* **30:13** [a]Literally *Happy*

the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night.

17And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar.[a] 19Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20And Leah said, "God has endowed me *with* a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun.[a] 21Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

22Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. 23And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." 24So she called his name Joseph,[a] and said, "The LORD shall add to me another son."

Jacob's Agreement with Laban

25And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. 26Give *me* my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you."

27And Laban said to him, "Please *stay,* if I have found favor in your eyes, *for* I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake." 28Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give *it.*"

29So *Jacob* said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. 30For what you had before I *came was* little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also provide for my own house?"

31So he said, "What shall I give you?"

And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: 32Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and *these* shall be my wages. 33So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that *is* not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if *it is* with me."

34And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!" 35So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had *some* white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave *them* into the hand of his sons. 36Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

37Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which *was* in the rods. 38And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. 39So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted. 40Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock.

41And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. 42But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put *them* in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. 43Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

Jacob Flees from Laban

31 Now *Jacob* heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." 2And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it *was* not *favorable* toward him as before. 3Then the

30:18 [a]Literally *Wages* **30:20** [a]Literally *Dwelling* **30:24** [a]Literally *He Will Add*

LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."

4So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, 5and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it *is* not *favorable* toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. 6And you know that with all my might I have served your father. 7Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me. 8If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. 9So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given *them* to me.

Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp?

GENESIS 31:27

10"And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks *were* streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted. 11Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' 12And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks *are* streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. 13I *am* the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar *and* where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.'"

14Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? 15Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. 16For all these riches which God has taken from our father are *really* ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."

17Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. 18And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. 19Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. 20And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. 21So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.

Laban Pursues Jacob

22And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. 23Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. 24But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."

25So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead.

26And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives *taken* with the sword? 27Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? 28And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in *so* doing. 29It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' 30And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, *but* why did you steal my gods?"

31Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' 32With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take *it* with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

33And Laban went into Jacob's tent, into

Leah's tent, and into the two maids' tents, but he did not find *them.* Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. 34Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find *them.* 35And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women *is* with me." And he searched but did not find the household idols.

36Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What *is* my trespass? What *is* my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? 37Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set *it* here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both! 38These twenty years I *have been* with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. 39That which was torn *by beasts* I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, *whether* stolen by day or stolen by night. 40*There* I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. 41Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. 42Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked *you* last night."

Laban's Covenant with Jacob

43And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "*These* daughters *are* my daughters, and *these* children *are* my children, and *this* flock *is* my flock; all that you see *is* mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? 44Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me."

45So Jacob took a stone and set it up *as* a pillar. 46Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. 47Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha,[a] but Jacob called it Galeed.[b] 48And Laban said, "This heap *is* a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, 49also Mizpah,[a] because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. 50If you afflict my daughters, or if you take *other* wives besides my daughters, *although* no man *is* with us—see, God *is* witness between you and me!"

51Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is *this* pillar, which I have placed between you and me. 52This heap *is* a witness, and *this* pillar *is* a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. 54Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. 55And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

Esau Comes to Meet Jacob

32 So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2When Jacob saw them, he said, "This *is* God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.[a]

3Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. 4And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. 5I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight." '"

6Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men *are* with him." 7So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he

31:47 [a]Literally, in Aramaic, *Heap of Witness* [b]Literally, in Hebrew, *Heap of Witness* **31:49** [a]Literally *Watch* **32:2** [a]Literally *Double Camp*

divided the people that *were* with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. 8And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."

9Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': 10I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. 11Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me *and* the mother with the children. 12For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"

13So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: 14two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. 16Then he delivered *them* to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves." 17And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose *are* these in front of you?' 18then you shall say, 'They *are* your servant Jacob's. It *is* a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also *is* behind us.'" 19So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; 20and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob *is* behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." 21So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

Wrestling with God

22And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. 23He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. 24Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks."

But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

27So He said to him, "What *is* your name?"

He said, "Jacob."

28And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel;[a] for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

29Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell *me* Your name, I pray."

And He said, "Why *is* it *that* you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

30So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel:[a] "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." 31Just as he crossed over Penuel[a] the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. 32Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which *is* on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.

Jacob and Esau Meet

33 Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. 2And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. 5And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who *are* these with you?"

32:28 [a]Literally *Prince with God* **32:30** [a]Literally *Face of God* **32:31** [a]Same as *Peniel*, verse 30

So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." [6]Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. [7]And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.

[8]Then Esau said, "What *do* you *mean by* all this company which I met?"

And he said, "*These are* to find favor in the sight of my lord."

[9]But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

[10]And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. [11]Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So he urged him, and he took *it.*

[12]Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you."

[13]But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children *are* weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing *are* with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. [14]Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir."

[15]And Esau said, "Now let me leave with you *some* of the people who *are* with me."

But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." [16]So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. [17]And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.[a]

Jacob Comes to Canaan

[18]Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. [19]And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. [20]Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.[a]

The Dinah Incident

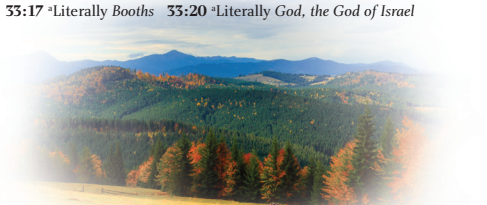
34 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. [2]And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. [3]His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. [4]So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife."

[5]And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came. [6]Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. [7]And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard *it;* and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not to be done. [8]But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. [9]And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. [10]So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it."

[11]Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. [12]Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife."

[13]But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. [14]And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that *would be* a reproach to us. [15]But on this *condition* we will consent to you: If you will become

33:17 [a]Literally *Booths* **33:20** [a]Literally *God, the God of Israel*



as we *are,* if every male of you is circumcised, [16]then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. [17]But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone."

[18]And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. [19]So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He *was* more honorable than all the household of his father.

[20]And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: [21]"These men *are* at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land *is* large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. [22]Only on this *condition* will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they *are* circumcised. [23]*Will* not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs *be* ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us." [24]And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

[25]Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. [26]And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out. [27]The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. [28]They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what *was* in the city and what *was* in the field, [29]and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that *was* in the houses.

[30]Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I *am* few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I."

[31]But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?"

Jacob's Return to Bethel

35 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."

[2]And Jacob said to his household and to all who *were* with him, "Put away the foreign gods that *are* among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. [3]Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone." [4]So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which *were* in their hands, and the earrings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which *was* by Shechem.

[5]And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. [6]So Jacob came to Luz (that *is,* Bethel), which *is* in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who *were* with him. [7]And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel,[a] because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

[8]Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth.[a]

[9]Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. [10]And God said to him, "Your name *is* Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. [11]Also God said to him: "I *am* God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. [12]The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land." [13]Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. [14]So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with

35:7 [a]Literally *God of the House of God* **35:8** [a]Literally *Terebinth of Weeping*

him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. 15And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

Death of Rachel

16Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored *in childbirth,* and she had hard labor. 17Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also." 18And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni;[a] but his father called him Benjamin.[b] 19So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that *is,* Bethlehem). 20And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

21Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. 22And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard *about it.*

Jacob's Twelve Sons

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: 23the sons of Leah *were* Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; 24the sons of Rachel *were* Joseph and Benjamin; 25the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, *were* Dan and Naphtali; 26and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, *were* Gad and Asher. These *were* the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.

Death of Isaac

27Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba[a] (that *is,* Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt. 28Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. 29So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, *being* old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

The Family of Esau

36 Now this *is* the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom. 2Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; 3and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. 4Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel. 5And Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These *were* the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

6Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. 7For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock. 8So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau *is* Edom.

9And this *is* the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. 10These *were* the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. 11And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho,[a] Gatam, and Kenaz.

12Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These *were* the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.

13These *were* the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.

14These were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon. And she bore to Esau: Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.

The Chiefs of Edom

15These *were* the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn *son* of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, 16Chief Korah,[a] Chief Gatam, *and* Chief Amalek. These *were* the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They *were* the sons of Adah.

17These *were* the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, and Chief Mizzah. These *were* the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These *were* the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.

35:18 [a]Literally *Son of My Sorrow* [b]Literally *Son of the Right Hand*
35:27 [a]Literally *Town of Arba* **36:11** [a]Spelled *Zephi* in 1 Chronicles 1:36 **36:16** [a]Samaritan Pentateuch omits *Chief Korah.*

18 And these *were* the sons of Aholibamah,
Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam, and
Chief Korah. These *were* the chiefs *who*
descended from Aholibamah, Esau's wife,
the daughter of Anah. 19 These *were* the
sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these *were*
their chiefs.

The Sons of Seir

20 These *were* the sons of Seir the Horite
who inhabited the land: Lotan, Shobal,
Zibeon, Anah, 21 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.
These *were* the chiefs of the Horites, the
sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.
22 And the sons of Lotan were Hori and
Hemam.[a] Lotan's sister *was* Timna.
23 These *were* the sons of Shobal: Alvan,[a]
Manahath, Ebal, Shepho,[b] and Onam.
24 These *were* the sons of Zibeon: both
Ajah and Anah. This *was the* Anah who
found the water[a] in the wilderness as he
pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon.
25 These *were* the children of Anah: Dishon
and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.
26 These *were* the sons of Dishon: [a]Hem-
dan,[b] Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. 27 These
were the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and
Akan.[a] 28 These *were* the sons of Dishan: Uz
and Aran.
29 These *were* the chiefs of the Horites:
Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon,
Chief Anah, 30 Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer,
and Chief Dishan. These *were* the chiefs
of the Horites, according to their chiefs in
the land of Seir.

The Kings of Edom

31 Now these *were* the kings who reigned
in the land of Edom before any king reigned
over the children of Israel: 32 Bela the son of
Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his
city *was* Dinhabah. 33 And when Bela died,
Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in
his place. 34 When Jobab died, Husham of the
land of the Temanites reigned in his place.
35 And when Husham died, Hadad the son of
Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of
Moab, reigned in his place. And the name
of his city *was* Avith. 36 When Hadad died,

36:22 [a]Spelled *Homam* in 1 Chronicles 1:39 **36:23** [a]Spelled *Alian* in 1 Chronicles 1:40 [b]Spelled *Shephi* in 1 Chronicles 1:40 **36:24** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate (*hot springs*); Septuagint reads *Jamin;* Targum reads *mighty men;* Talmud interprets as *mules.* **36:26** [a]Hebrew *Dishan* [b]Spelled *Hamran* in 1 Chronicles 1:41 **36:27** [a]Spelled *Jaakan* in 1 Chronicles 1:42



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us?
Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him
even more for his dreams and for his words. | GENESIS 37:8

I did not hate the Lord for His claim to lordship, but I feared Him. I thought if I submitted to Him, somehow He would violate me. I feared that He would not allow me to be married and have a family. If I surrendered to Him, He would send me to some remote place on the earth where I would have to live and die among strange people speaking a strange language. I believed, as the brothers of Joseph believed, that He wanted to be Lord just to lord it over me. I ran from His lordship for seven long years. I had no idea that His lordship was friendship and the safest thing I could ever do was to allow Him to be the undisputed Lord of my life. I am certain that the Lord, like Joseph in the story, must have wept much for me because I was not prepared for His revelation. Praise God for His patience!

Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place.
37 And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-*by*-the-River reigned in his place.
38 When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place.
39 And when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, Hadar[a] reigned in his place; and the name of his city *was* Pau.[b] His wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

The Chiefs of Esau

40 And these *were* the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah,[a] Chief Jetheth,
41 Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon,
42 Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar,
43 Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These *were* the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession. Esau *was* the father of the Edomites.

Joseph Dreams of Greatness

37 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.
2 This *is* the history of Jacob.

Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of *many* colors.
4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

5 Now Joseph had a dream, and he told *it* to his brothers; and they hated him even more.
6 So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:
7 There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

8 And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

10 So he told *it* to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What *is* this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"
11 And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter *in mind*.

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

12 Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.
13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding *the flock* in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them."

So he said to him, "Here I am."

14 Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

15 Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

16 So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding *their flocks*."

17 And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

18 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.
19 Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!
20 Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

21 But Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him."
22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit which *is* in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him

36:39 [a]Spelled *Hadad* in Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, and 1 Chronicles 1:50 [b]Spelled *Pai* in 1 Chronicles 1:50
36:40 [a]Spelled *Aliah* in 1 Chronicles 1:51

out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

23So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph *of* his tunic, the tunic of *many* colors that *was* on him. 24Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.

25And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry *them* down to Egypt. 26So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit *is there* if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh." And his brothers listened. 28Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

29Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. 30And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad *is* no *more;* and I, where shall I go?"

31So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. 32Then they sent the tunic of *many* colors, and they brought *it* to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it *is* your son's tunic or not?"

33And he recognized it and said, "*It is* my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." 34Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. 35And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

36Now the Midianites[a] had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh *and* captain of the guard.

Judah and Tamar

38 It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name *was* Hirah. 2And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name *was* Shua, and he married her and went in to her. 3So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. 4She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. 5And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when she bore him.

6Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name *was* Tamar. 7But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him. 8And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." 9But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. 10And the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also.

11Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

12Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." 14So she took off her widow's garments, covered *herself* with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which *was* on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. 15When Judah saw her, he thought she *was* a harlot, because she had covered her face. 16Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she *was* his daughter-in-law.

So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"

17And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock."

So she said, "Will you give *me* a pledge till you send *it?*"

37:36 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Medanites.*

[18]Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?"

So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that *is* in your hand." Then he gave *them* to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. [19]So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

[20]And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her. [21]Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who *was* openly by the roadside?"

And they said, "There was no harlot in this *place*."

[22]So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this *place*."

[23]Then Judah said, "Let her take *them* for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

[24]And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she *is* with child by harlotry."

So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

[25]When she *was* brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I *am* with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these *are*—the signet and cord, and staff."

[26]So Judah acknowledged *them* and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.

[27]Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins *were* in her womb. [28]And so it was, when she was giving birth, that *the one* put out *his* hand; and the midwife took a scarlet *thread* and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." [29]Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? *This* breach *be* upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez.[a] [30]Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

Joseph a Slave in Egypt

39 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. [2]The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. [3]And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. [4]So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all *that* he had he put under his authority. [5]So it was, from the time *that* he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. [6]Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

[7]And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

[8]But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what *is* with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. [9]*There is* no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you *are* his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

[10]So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her *or* to be with her.

[11]But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house *was* inside, [12]that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. [13]And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, [14]that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to

38:29 [a]Literally *Breach* or *Breakthrough*

mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. 15And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside."

16So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. 17Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; 18so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."

19So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused. 20Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* confined. And he was there in the prison. 21But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who *were* in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. 23The keeper of the prison did not look into anything *that was* under *Joseph's* authority,[a] because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made *it* prosper.

The Prisoners' Dreams

40 It came to pass after these things *that* the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. 2And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. 3So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph *was* confined. 4And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.

5Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who *were* confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night *and* each man's dream with its *own* interpretation. 6And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they *were* sad. 7So he asked Pharaoh's officers who *were* with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look *so* sad today?"

8And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it."

So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *them* to me, please."

9Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine *was* before me, 10and in the vine *were* three branches; it *was* as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. 11Then Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

12And Joseph said to him, "This *is* the interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three days. 13Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. 14But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. 15For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."

16When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also *was* in my dream, and there *were* three white baskets on my head. 17In the uppermost basket *were* all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head."

18So Joseph answered and said, "This *is* the interpretation of it: The three baskets *are* three days. 19Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."

20Now it came to pass on the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. 21Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. 22But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. 23Yet the

39:23 [a]Literally *his hand*

chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Pharaoh's Dreams

41 Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. 2Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. 3Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the *other* cows on the bank of the river. 4And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. 5He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. 6Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. 7And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, *it was* a dream. 8Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but *there was* no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

9Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults this day. 10When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, *both* me and the chief baker, 11we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his *own* dream. 12Now there *was* a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his *own* dream. 13And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."

14Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. 15And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and *there is* no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you *that* you can understand a dream, to interpret it."

16So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "*It is* not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

17Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. 18Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. 19Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. 20And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. 21When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they *were* just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. 22Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. 23Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, *and* blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. 24And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told *this* to the magicians, but *there was* no one who could explain *it* to me."

25Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one; God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do: 26The seven good cows *are* seven years, and the seven good heads *are* seven years; the dreams *are* one. 27And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them *are* seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. 28This *is* the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do. 29Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; 30but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. 31So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it *will be* very severe. 32And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

33"Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34Let Pharaoh do *this,* and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth *of the produce* of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. 35And let them gather all the food of those

good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. 36Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine."

Joseph's Rise to Power

37So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. 38And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find *such a one* as this, a man in whom *is* the Spirit of God?"

39Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, *there is* no one as discerning and wise as you. 40You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." 41And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

42Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. 43And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So he set him over all the land of Egypt. 44Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I *am* Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." 45And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. 47Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. 48So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. 49Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for *it was* immeasurable.

50And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. 51Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh:[a] "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." 52And the name of the second he called Ephraim:[a] "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

53Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, 54and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." 56The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses[a] and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. 57So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy *grain,* because the famine was severe in all lands.

Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

42 When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" 2And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die."

3So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. 4But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him." 5And the sons of Israel went to buy *grain* among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6Now Joseph *was* governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with *their* faces to the earth. 7Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?"

And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

8So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. 9Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had

41:51 [a]Literally *Making Forgetful* **41:52** [a]Literally *Fruitfulness*
41:56 [a]Literally *all that was in them*

dreamed about them, and said to them, "You *are* spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"

10And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. 11We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* honest *men;* your servants are not spies."

12But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

13And they said, "Your servants *are* twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest *is* with our father today, and one *is* no more."

14But Joseph said to them, "It *is* as I spoke to you, saying, 'You *are* spies!' 15In this *manner* you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether *there is* any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you *are* spies!" 17So he put them all together in prison three days.

18Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, *for* I fear God: 19If you *are* honest *men,* let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. 20And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die."

And they did so. 21Then they said to one another, "We *are* truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us."

22And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us." 23But they did not know that Joseph understood *them,* for he spoke to them through an interpreter. 24And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

The Brothers Return to Canaan

25Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. 26So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. 27But as one *of them* opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. 28So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed *them* and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What *is* this *that* God has done to us?"

29Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: 30"The man *who is* lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. 31But we said to him, 'We *are* honest *men;* we are not spies. 32We *are* twelve brothers, sons of our father; one *is* no *more,* and the youngest *is* with our father this day in the land of Canaan.' 33Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that you *are* honest *men:* Leave one of your brothers *here* with me, take *food for* the famine of your households, and be gone. 34And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you *are* not spies, but *that* you *are* honest *men.* I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.'"

35Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money *was* in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. 36And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no *more,* Simeon is no *more,* and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me."

37Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him *back* to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you."

38But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

Joseph's Brothers Return with Benjamin

43 Now the famine *was* severe in the land. 2And it came to pass, when

they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food."

3But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.' 4If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 5But if you will not send *him,* we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.'"

6And Israel said, "Why did you deal *so* wrongfully with me *as* to tell the man whether you had still *another* brother?"

7But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, '*Is* your father still alive? Have you *another* brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

8Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you *and* also our little ones. 9I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him *back* to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. 10For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time."

11And their father Israel said to them, "If *it must be* so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. 12Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. 13Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. 14And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"

15So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. 16When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take *these* men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for *these* men will dine with me at noon." 17Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

18Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "*It is* because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys."

19When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, 20and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; 21but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, *each* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. 22And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

23But he said, "Peace *be* with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

24So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. 25Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

26And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. 27Then he asked them about *their* well-being, and said, "*Is* your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? *Is* he still alive?"

28And they answered, "Your servant our father *is* in good health; he *is* still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.

29Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "*Is* this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." 30Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought *somewhere* to weep. And he went into *his* chamber and wept there. 31Then he washed his face and came out;

and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread."

32So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that *is* an abomination to the Egyptians. 33And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. 34Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Joseph's Cup

44 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. 2Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. 3As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. 4When they had gone out of the city, *and* were not *yet* far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? 5*Is* not this *the one* from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.'"

6So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. 7And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. 8Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? 9With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."

10And he said, "Now also *let* it *be* according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." 11Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. 12So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

14So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he *was* still there; and they fell before him on the ground. 15And Joseph said to them, "What deed *is* this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?"

16Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and *he* also with whom the cup was found."

17But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

Judah Intercedes for Benjamin

18Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you *are* even like Pharaoh. 19My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' 20And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of *his* old age, *who is* young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' 21Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' 22And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.' 23But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.'

24"So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. 25And our father said, 'Go back *and* buy us a little food.' 26But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother *is* with us.' 27Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; 28and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. 29But if you take this one

also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.'

30"Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, 31it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with us,* that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' 33Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. 34For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

Joseph Revealed to His Brothers

45 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard *it.*

3Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I *am* Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. 4And



REBECCA ISAACS BOWMAN • Homecoming Artist, *The Isaacs*

I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. | GENESIS 45:4, 5

I have often asked myself the questions: Do I have what it takes to truly forgive someone who has hurt me? How have I reacted when someone has trespassed against me or invaded my life, causing me deep sorrow or trouble? Maybe these are questions that only get answered as we experience pain, hurt, and rejection. I have to believe that forgiveness is a process, a skill we choose to develop and practice for a lifetime.

What a humbling example is the story of Joseph, a young man highly favored from birth, a dreamer, a man who was envied by his brothers for the wisdom God had given him. Scripture describes the disloyalty of his brothers, who sold him into Egyptian slavery. I can't help but feel the sorrow, loss, and disappointment that he must have been feeling. But the hand of God was upon his life, and the favor and power of God was granted him to govern the Egyptians under Pharaoh. A perfect plan was being birthed through Joseph's great sorrow. A famine hit the land of Canaan where his family lived. It is not by chance that the brothers who betrayed Joseph found themselves bowing down, seeking mercy, hoping that grace would be given to them. The brothers must have been feeling ashamed, guilty, and not worthy of the grace they were going to receive. But isn't it just like God to turn a situation around? At the moment Joseph

Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I *am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. [5]But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. [6]For these two years the famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor harvesting. [7]And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. [8]So now *it was* not you *who* sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

[9]"Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. [10]You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. [11]There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for *there are* still five years of famine." '

[12]"And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that *it is* my mouth that speaks to you. [13]So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here."

was confronted, face-to-face with his betrayers, he was given compassion, a deep desire for restoration, the power to forgive.

What a lesson we can all learn from this story! Joseph could have allowed his situation to turn into bitterness and anger. But instead, he sought after God's wisdom and discernment. He was given the insight to know God had a bigger plan.

In my life my sweetest joys, my overcoming victories have been birthed through my deepest sorrows. I am learning that forgiveness is a choice. When I choose to forgive, I am neither minimizing my hurt nor the severity of the offense. Forgiveness is not just to release the person who hurt me; forgiveness is a gift I give myself! It is an act of love, compassion, and pure mercy. Forgiveness is liberating; it can set me free from the chains that bind my heart. Ephesians 4:32 says, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." It is challenging to be kind to the person who hurts you. But I have been on both sides of forgiveness. I have needed mercy. I have needed to be forgiven. I have found myself in a place where I longed for compassion. I have also experienced the joy that came when I forgave someone else and was able to show compassion and mercy. If we want to be forgiven, we must forgive others. "Whenever you stand praying," says Mark 11:25, "if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."

My prayer is that I may exercise my faith today, asking God to give me strength to show mercy that I may receive mercy. I pray I will be compassionate so I may be shown compassion. I pray I will be forgiving so that I will, too, be forgiven.

14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's
neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his
neck. 15 Moreover he kissed all his broth-
ers and wept over them, and after that his
brothers talked with him.

16 Now the report of it was heard in
Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's broth-
ers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh
and his servants well. 17 And Pharaoh said
to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this:
Load your animals and depart; go to the
land of Canaan. 18 Bring your father and
your households and come to me; I will give
you the best of the land of Egypt, and you
will eat the fat of the land. 19 Now you are
commanded—do this: Take carts out of the
land of Egypt for your little ones and your
wives; bring your father and come. 20 Also
do not be concerned about your goods, for
the best of all the land of Egypt *is* yours.'"

21 Then the sons of Israel did so; and
Joseph gave them carts, according to the
command of Pharaoh, and he gave them
provisions for the journey. 22 He gave to
all of them, to each man, changes of gar-
ments; but to Benjamin he gave three
hundred *pieces* of silver and five changes
of garments. 23 And he sent to his father
these *things:* ten donkeys loaded with the
good things of Egypt, and ten female don-
keys loaded with grain, bread, and food for
his father for the journey. 24 So he sent his
brothers away, and they departed; and he
said to them, "See that you do not become
troubled along the way."

25 Then they went up out of Egypt, and
came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their
father. 26 And they told him, saying, "Joseph
is still alive, and he *is* governor over all the
land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood
still, because he did not believe them.
27 But when they told him all the words
which Joseph had said to them, and when
he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to
carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father
revived. 28 Then Israel said, "*It is* enough.
Joseph my son *is* still alive. I will go and see
him before I die."

Jacob's Journey to Egypt

46 So Israel took his journey with all
that he had, and came to Beersheba,
and offered sacrifices to the God of his
father Isaac. 2 Then God spoke to Israel in the
visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!"

And he said, "Here I am."

3 So He said, "I *am* God, the God of your
father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for
I will make of you a great nation there. 4 I
will go down with you to Egypt, and I will
also surely bring you up *again;* and Joseph
will put his hand on your eyes."

5 Then Jacob arose from Beersheba;
and the sons of Israel carried their father
Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in
the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry
him. 6 So they took their livestock and their
goods, which they had acquired in the land
of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and
all his descendants with him. 7 His sons
and his sons' sons, his daughters and his
sons' daughters, and all his descendants he
brought with him to Egypt.

8 Now these *were* the names of the chil-
dren of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went
to Egypt: Reuben *was* Jacob's firstborn.
9 The sons of Reuben *were* Hanoch, Pallu,
Hezron, and Carmi. 10 The sons of Simeon
were Jemuel,[a] Jamin, Ohad, Jachin,[b] Zohar,[c]
and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.
11 The sons of Levi *were* Gershon, Kohath, and
Merari. 12 The sons of Judah *were* Er, Onan,
Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan
died in the land of Canaan). The sons of
Perez were Hezron and Hamul. 13 The sons of
Issachar *were* Tola, Puvah,[a] Job,[b] and Shimron.
14 The sons of Zebulun *were* Sered, Elon, and
Jahleel. 15 These *were* the sons of Leah, whom
she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, with his
daughter Dinah. All the persons, his sons
and his daughters, *were* thirty-three.

16 The sons of Gad *were* Ziphion,[a] Haggi,
Shuni, Ezbon,[b] Eri, Arodi,[c] and Areli. 17 The
sons of Asher *were* Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui,
Beriah, and Serah, their sister. And the sons
of Beriah *were* Heber and Malchiel. 18 These
were the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave
to Leah his daughter; and these she bore
to Jacob: sixteen persons.

19 The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, *were*
Joseph and Benjamin. 20 And to Joseph in

46:10 [a]Spelled *Nemuel* in 1 Chronicles 4:24 [b]Called *Jarib* in 1 Chronicles 4:24 [c]Called *Zerah* in 1 Chronicles 4:24 **46:13** [a]Spelled *Puah* in 1 Chronicles 7:1 [b]Same as *Jashub* in Numbers 26:24 and 1 Chronicles 7:1 **46:16** [a]Spelled *Zephon* in Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Numbers 26:15 [b]Called *Ozni* in Numbers 26:16 [c]Spelled *Arod* in Numbers 26:17

the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. 21The sons of Benjamin *were* Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim,[a] and Ard. 22These *were* the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: fourteen persons in all.

23The son of Dan *was* Hushim.[a] 24The sons of Naphtali *were* Jahzeel,[a] Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.[b] 25These *were* the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: seven persons in all.

26All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives, *were* sixty-six persons in all. 27And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt *were* two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.

Jacob Settles in Goshen

28Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him *the way* to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen. 29So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.

30And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you *are* still alive."

31Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and those of my father's house, who *were* in the land of Canaan, have come to me. 32And the men *are* shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.' 33So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' 34that you shall say, 'Your servants' occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we *and* also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd *is* an abomination to the Egyptians."

47 Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they *are* in the land of Goshen." 2And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. 3Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What *is* your occupation?"

And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants *are* shepherds, both we *and* also our fathers." 4And they said to Pharaoh, "We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine *is* severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

5Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. 6The land of Egypt *is* before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know *any* competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock."

7Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. 8Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old *are* you?"

9And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." 10So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

11And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. 12Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in *their* families.

Joseph Deals with the Famine

13Now *there was* no bread in all the land; for the famine *was* very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. 14And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the

46:21 [a]Called *Hupham* in Numbers 26:39 **46:23** [a]Called *Shuham* in Numbers 26:42 **46:24** [a]Spelled *Jahziel* in 1 Chronicles 7:13 [b]Spelled *Shallum* in 1 Chronicles 7:13

land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

15So when the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed."

16Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you *bread* for your livestock, if the money is gone." 17So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread *in exchange* for all their livestock that year.

18When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. 19Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give *us* seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate."

20Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. 21And as for the people, he moved them into the cities,[a] from *one* end of the borders of Egypt to the *other* end. 22Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations *allotted to them* by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands.

23Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, *here is* seed for you, and you shall sow the land. 24And it

47:21 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *made the people virtual slaves.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel. | GENESIS 49:7

The tribe of Levi was cursed for their sin against the Hivites by taking vengeance on them for violating their sister, Dinah. God vowed that they would not have an inheritance in the land when it was divided up among the tribes. They forfeited their right to an inheritance; they would be scattered throughout the land. They repented! After the sin of the golden calf, Moses called for those who would line up with the Lord to come forward and identify with Him. The entire tribe of Levi crossed over the line to the Lord's side. Now, what of the curse? Would they still be scattered in the light of their repentance? Yes! But God turned the curse to a blessing. He chose the Levites to be His priests. They would be scattered among the eleven tribes, but to the very choicest parts of their inheritance. Instead of inheriting real estate, they became the inheritors of God Himself. If ever there was a picture of God turning a curse to a blessing, here it is. The tribe of Levi scattered to the choicest places in the Promised Land! That is grace!

shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones."

25So they said, "You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." 26And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, *that* Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, *which* did not become Pharaoh's.

Joseph's Vow to Jacob

27So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly. 28And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. 29When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, 30but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place."

And he said, "I will do as you have said."

31Then he said, "Swear to me." And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.

Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons

48 Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father *is* sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. 3Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you *as* an everlasting possession.' 5And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, *are* mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. 7But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when *there was* but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

8Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who *are* these?"

9Joseph said to his father, "They *are* my sons, whom God has given me in this *place*."

And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them." 10Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, *so that* he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. 11And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!"

12So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. 13And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought *them* near him. 14Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid *it* on Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh *was* the firstborn. 15And he blessed Joseph, and said:

"God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has fed me all my life long to this day,
16 The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless the lads;
Let my name be named upon them,
And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

17Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18And Joseph

said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this *one is* the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."

20 So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!'" And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. 22 Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

Jacob's Last Words to His Sons

49 And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:

2 "Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob,
And listen to Israel your father.

3 "Reuben, you are my firstborn,
My might and the beginning of my strength,
The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.
4 Unstable as water, you shall not excel,
Because you went up to your father's bed;
Then you defiled *it*—
He went up to my couch.

5 "Simeon and Levi *are* brothers;



BILL GAITHER

"Thus you shall say to Joseph: 'I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. | GENESIS 50:17

Words can get us into trouble. And quick words can get us into *serious* trouble. But there are some extremely powerful words that can begin to get us *out* of trouble. They are: "I'm so sorry. Please forgive me."

The Vocal Band is currently singing a song written by Gerald Crabb that starts out like this:

My sleep is gone, my heart is full of sorrow
I can't believe how much I've let you down
I dread the pain that waits for me tomorrow
When the sun reveals my broken dreams scattered on the ground
Please forgive me
I need your grace to make it through
All I have is You, I'm at your mercy
Lord, I'll serve You until my dying day
Help others find the way, I'm at your mercy
Please forgive me

"Please Forgive Me"

Instruments of cruelty *are in* their
dwelling place.
6 Let not my soul enter their council;
Let not my honor be united to their
assembly;
For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their self-will they hamstrung
an ox.
7 Cursed *be* their anger, for *it is*
fierce;
And their wrath, for it is cruel!
I will divide them in Jacob
And scatter them in Israel.

8 "Judah, you *are he* whom your brothers
shall praise;
Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your
enemies;
Your father's children shall bow down
before you.
9 Judah *is* a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, you have gone
up.
He bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?
10 The scepter shall not depart from
Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;
And to Him *shall be* the obedience of
the people.
11 Binding his donkey to the vine,
And his donkey's colt to the choice vine,
He washed his garments in wine,
And his clothes in the blood of grapes.
12 His eyes *are* darker than wine,
And his teeth whiter than milk.

13 "Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of
the sea;
He *shall become* a haven for ships,
And his border shall adjoin Sidon.

Michael English sings lead on the song, and as I hear him sing these words night after night, all I can say is, "Me too!"

How many times have we seen relationships get turned upside down over angry words? The hurt goes on and on for so long, both parties forget what they were fighting about. It ends when somebody realizes that the relationship is more important than the fight and finally says, "I'm sorry. Forgive me."

People often ask me, "Does the Homecoming family *really* love each other as much as they seem to on TV?" They truly do. And possibly *more* than you can see on TV. If you look back into their histories, many of the artists were once competitors who had interpersonal conflicts reaching back for decades. When they found themselves singing elbow-to-elbow about God's love and forgiveness, they chose to work out their differences. Forgiveness is the reason I can say with confidence that this family of artists genuinely loves each other like family.

Too many Thanksgivings and Christmases are sad—but don't have to be—because somebody refuses to reach out a little further to forgive. Unforgiveness not only causes interpersonal conflict, but negatively impacts communities, churches, states, nations, and even international relations. But the key to joyful, happy relationships that enjoy genuine acceptance is found in one simple word: forgiveness.

14 "Issachar is a strong donkey,
Lying down between two burdens;
15 He saw that rest *was* good,
And that the land *was* pleasant;
He bowed his shoulder to bear *a burden,*
And became a band of slaves.

16 "Dan shall judge his people
As one of the tribes of Israel.
17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way,
A viper by the path,
That bites the horse's heels
So that its rider shall fall backward.
18 I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!

19 "Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him,
But he shall triumph at last.

20 "Bread from Asher *shall be* rich,
And he shall yield royal dainties.

21 "Naphtali *is* a deer let loose;
He uses beautiful words.

22 "Joseph *is* a fruitful bough,
A fruitful bough by a well;
His branches run over the wall.
23 The archers have bitterly grieved him,
Shot *at him* and hated him.
24 But his bow remained in strength,
And the arms of his hands were made strong
By the hands of the Mighty *God* of Jacob
(From there *is* the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),
25 By the God of your father who will help you,
And by the Almighty who will bless you
With blessings of heaven above,
Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,
Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." | GENESIS 50:24

The loss of a loved one can be devastating. The loss of a spouse, saying goodbye to a parent, or the untimely death of a child can create unbearable sorrow. My brother-in-law, younger than I and always in excellent health, was suddenly stricken with a very aggressive type of cancer resulting in a brief illness and death. He was always an encourager, and he remained an encourager through his illness. During one of his hospital stays, I called in from the road. His speech was becoming impaired, and he was having difficulty making sentences. My sister happened to be out of the room when I called and Phil answered the phone. I told him that I would call back a little later and speak to my sister, and not knowing what to expect in reply, I simply asked him how he was doing. He answered, "Every day's a holiday and every meal's a banquet!" Those words will forever be etched in my memory. Two of their good friends brought their three-year-old son to his viewing. The line was long and when they finally got up to the casket, the three-year-old, who was accustomed to an energetic Phil, looked at his parents and asked, "What is he doing in the treasure chest?"

26 The blessings of your father
Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors,
Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.
They shall be on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.

27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;
In the morning he shall devour the prey,
And at night he shall divide the spoil."

28 All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel, and this *is* what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing.

Jacob's Death and Burial

29 Then he charged them and said to them: "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 in the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. 31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. 32 The field and the cave that *is* there *were* purchased from the sons of Heth." 33 And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

50 Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him. 2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. 3 Forty days were required for him, for such are the

When Joseph was in Egypt, he said to his brothers, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land into the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (Gen. 50:24). Joseph died at 110 years old, was embalmed and put in a coffin in Egypt. Someone has pointed out that there was not a word in the Hebrew language for coffin, so in Hebrew it read that he was put in a *hope chest*. The apostle Paul said that Christ left the church a treasure. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Cor. 4:7). Christianity is not the earthen vessel—nor is it the treasure; Christ is the treasure, and each of us is an earthen vessel. Christianity is not the removal of weakness, nor is it merely the manifestation of divine power—it is the manifestation of divine power in human weakness. The treasure God gives is Christ Himself placed in earthen vessels. It is amazing that God would trust so much to such a fragile container! But the very commonness of the container best displays the amazing beauty of what it contains, and no one can mistake the container for the power of what it contains.

As they promised, the children of Israel carried the bones of Joseph out of Egypt into the promise land. We, too, as mere bones that hold a treasure will be carried to the Promised Land. We have a promise in 1 Corinthians 15, thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of the treasure, we will live on.

days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

4Now when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, 5'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.' "

6And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear."

7So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, 8as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. 9And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering.

10Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which *is* beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. 11And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This *is* a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim,[a] which *is* beyond the Jordan.

12So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. 13For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. 14And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

Joseph Reassures His Brothers

15When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." 16So they sent *messengers* to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 17'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you." ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

18Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we *are* your servants."

19Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? 20But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive. 21Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Death of Joseph

22So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. 23Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third *generation.* The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees.

24And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." 25Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." 26So Joseph died, *being* one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

50:11 [a]Literally *Mourning of Egypt*

THE SECOND BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

Exodus



Israel's Suffering in Egypt

1 Now these *are* the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: [2]Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; [3]Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; [4]Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. [5]All those who were descendants[a] of Jacob were seventy[b] persons (for Joseph was in Egypt *already*). [6]And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. [7]But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

[8]Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. [9]And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we; [10]come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and *so* go up out of the land." [11]Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. [12]But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. [13]So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. [14]And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve *was* with rigor.

[15]Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one *was* Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; [16]and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see *them* on the birthstools, if it *is* a son, then you shall kill him; but if it *is* a daughter, then she shall live." [17]But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. [18]So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?"

[19]And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women *are* not like the Egyptian women; for they *are* lively and give birth before the midwives come to them."

[20]Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. [21]And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them.

[22]So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born[a] you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

Moses Is Born

2 And a man of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi. [2]So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child,* she hid him three months. [3]But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid *it* in the reeds by the river's bank. [4]And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

[5]Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. [6]And when she opened *it,* she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

1:5 [a]Literally *who came from the loins of* [b]Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *seventy-five* (compare Acts 7:14). **1:22** [a]Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Targum add *to the Hebrews.*

[7]Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?"

[8]And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. [9]Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give *you* your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. [10]And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses,[a] saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

Moses Flees to Midian

[11]Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. [12]So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. [13]And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?"

[14]Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?"

So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!" [15]When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

[16]Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. [17]Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

[18]When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "How *is it that* you have come so soon today?"

[19]And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock."

2:10 [a]Literally *Drawn Out*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine* Devotional Contributor

But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. | EXODUS 2:3

When the parents of Moses placed their baby in the Nile, they placed him in the hands of the Lord. The Nile, on the low level of earth, was the river of death. That river was red with the blood of Hebrew infants. I thought, "If my wife and I were the parents of Moses, the Nile River would be the last place on earth we would place him." That was before our children were of age and ready to leave home. How can we let them go into that dangerous place? What will they face in that secular college? What awaits them away from the security of their home? It was a precious day when, one by one we placed our six children in the ark we had prepared, and gently set them afloat on the Nile. How we praise the Lord for His providential care over our children. It was life, not death, the day we released our children into the care of the Lord!

20So he said to his daughters, "And
where *is* he? Why *is* it *that* you have left the
man? Call him, that he may eat bread."
21Then Moses was content to live with
the man, and he gave Zipporah his daugh-
ter to Moses. 22And she bore *him* a son. He
called his name Gershom,[a] for he said, "I
have been a stranger in a foreign land."
23Now it happened in the process of
time that the king of Egypt died. Then the
children of Israel groaned because of the
bondage, and they cried out; and their cry
came up to God because of the bondage.
24So God heard their groaning, and God
remembered His covenant with Abraham,
with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25And God
looked upon the children of Israel, and
God acknowledged *them*.

Moses at the Burning Bush

3 Now Moses was tending the flock of
Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of
Midian. And he led the flock to the back of
the desert, and came to Horeb, the moun-
tain of God. 2And the Angel of the LORD
appeared to him in a flame of fire from the
midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold,
the bush was burning with fire, but the
bush *was* not consumed. 3Then Moses said,
"I will now turn aside and see this great
sight, why the bush does not burn."
4So when the LORD saw that he turned
aside to look, God called to him from the
midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!"
And he said, "Here I am."
5Then He said, "Do not draw near this
place. Take your sandals off your feet, for
the place where you stand *is* holy ground."
6Moreover He said, "I *am* the God of your
father—the God of Abraham, the God of
Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid
his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.
7And the LORD said: "I have surely seen
the oppression of My people who *are* in
Egypt, and have heard their cry because
of their taskmasters, for I know their sor-
rows. 8So I have come down to deliver them
out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to
bring them up from that land to a good
and large land, to a land flowing with milk
and honey, to the place of the Canaanites
and the Hittites and the Amorites and the
Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.
9Now therefore, behold, the cry of the
children of Israel has come to Me, and I
have also seen the oppression with which
the Egyptians oppress them. 10Come now,
therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh
that you may bring My people, the children
of Israel, out of Egypt."
11But Moses said to God, "Who *am* I that
I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should
bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"
12So He said, "I will certainly be with
you. And this *shall be* a sign to you that I
have sent you: When you have brought the
people out of Egypt, you shall serve God
on this mountain."
13Then Moses said to God, "Indeed,
when I come to the children of Israel and
say to them, 'The God of your fathers has
sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What
is His name?' what shall I say to them?"
14And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO
I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to
the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to
you.'" 15Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus
you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The
LORD God of your fathers, the God of
Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of
Jacob, has sent me to you. This *is* My name
forever, and this *is* My memorial to all gen-
erations.' 16Go and gather the elders of
Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD
God of your fathers, the God of Abraham,
of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me,
saying, "I have surely visited you and *seen*
what is done to you in Egypt; 17and I have
said I will bring you up out of the afflic-
tion of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites
and the Hittites and the Amorites and the
Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites,
to a land flowing with milk and honey." '
18Then they will heed your voice; and you
shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to
the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him,
'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met
with us; and now, please, let us go three
days' journey into the wilderness, that we
may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' 19But
I am sure that the king of Egypt will not
let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.
20So I will stretch out My hand and strike
Egypt with all My wonders which I will do
in its midst; and after that he will let you

2:22 [a]Literally *Stranger There*

go. [21]And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. [22]But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put *them* on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

Miraculous Signs for Pharaoh

4 Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"

[2]So the LORD said to him, "What *is* that in your hand?"

He said, "A rod."

[3]And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. [4]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take *it* by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), [5]"that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

[6]Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous, like snow. [7]And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his *other* flesh. [8]"Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. [9]And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take



GENE McDONALD • Homecoming Artist, formerly with *The Florida Boys*

So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say." | EXODUS 4:11

When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He told him He had heard the cries of the Israelites and had seen their suffering. But when God told Moses He had chosen *him* to go speak to Pharaoh and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses was afraid. He told God he wasn't eloquent. He said in his whole life God hadn't spoken to him. He argued that he was a slow talker and his tongue got in the way. He begged God to send somebody else.

Even a burning bush, a rumbling mountain, a staff turning to a snake, and his own hand turning leprous and then healthy again didn't convince Moses of his call. God wasn't pleased with this response, but He agreed to use the mouth of Moses' brother Aaron to help deliver the message to God's people. But He told Moses that his staff would perform miracles as He directed him to use it.

I started singing with my family when I was just a boy. At that time in my church circles, women weren't even allowed to pray and kids were not to talk

water from the river[a] and pour *it* on the dry *land*. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry *land*."

[10]Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue."

[11]So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have* not I, the LORD? [12]Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."

[13]But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever *else* You may send."

[14]So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. [15]Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. [16]So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. [17]And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs."

Moses Goes to Egypt

[18]So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brethren who *are* in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive."

And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

[19]Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead." [20]Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on

4:9 [a]That is, the Nile

at all. For twenty years, I didn't talk from the stage. In fact, I sang for forty years and never spoke as much as ten minutes' worth of words. When I joined the full-time group The Florida Boys, I was afraid I wouldn't know what to say, or that I would say the wrong thing. I remained verbally paralyzed.

When I left the group to sing on my own, I didn't start right away, but got another job instead. I made excuses for not accepting singing engagements to keep from having to say anything. I put off what I knew God had called me to do. When I did sing, I couldn't concentrate for thinking of what I would say. Even when people told me they were blessed by my singing, I couldn't believe them because I was so intimidated by my lack of speaking skill.

In spite of my shortcomings, God made a place for me to serve. He is reminding me that He is on my side and will tell me what to say. I am still not an eloquent speaker, but God has guided me here and has given me gifts that He wants me to share. I don't have a staff that will turn into a snake, but I do have a song that will tell people what God wants them to hear.

I pray every day that God will give me better words and make it easier for me to speak them and not stumble over them. I am getting better, especially when I forget about how inadequate I am and think about how adequate He is. I take my time and realize that I am on holy ground when He is guiding my footsteps whether I'm on or off stage.

a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

21And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. 22Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel *is* My son, My firstborn. 23So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn." '"

24And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. 25Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast *it* at *Moses'*[a] feet, and said, "Surely you *are* a husband of blood to me!" 26So He let him go. Then she said, "*You are* a husband of blood!"—because of the circumcision.

27And the LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him. 28So Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. 29Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. 30And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. 31So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

First Encounter with Pharaoh

5 Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'"

2And Pharaoh said, "Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go."

3So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

4Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get *back* to your labor." 5And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land *are* many now, and you make them rest from their labor!"

6So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, 7"You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.' 9Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words."

10And the taskmasters of the people and their officers went out and spoke to the people, saying, "Thus says Pharaoh: 'I will not give you straw. 11Go, get yourselves straw where you can find it; yet none of your work will be reduced.'" 12So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. 13And the taskmasters forced *them* to hurry, saying, "Fulfill your work, *your* daily quota, as when there was straw." 14Also the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten *and* were asked, "Why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?"

15Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, "Why are you dealing thus with your servants? 16There is no straw given to your servants, and they say to us, 'Make brick!' And indeed your servants *are* beaten, but the fault *is* in your *own* people."

17But he said, "You *are* idle! Idle! Therefore you say, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to the LORD.' 18Therefore go now *and* work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks." 19And the officers of the children of Israel saw *that* they *were* in trouble after it was said, "You shall not reduce *any* bricks from your daily quota."

20Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there

4:25 [a]Literally *his*

to meet them. [21]And they said to them, "Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us."

Israel's Deliverance Assured

[22]So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why *is* it You have sent me? [23]For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."

6 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

[2]And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I *am* the LORD. [3]I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name LORD[a] I was not known to them. [4]I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. [5]And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. [6]Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I *am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. [7]I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. [8]And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you *as* a heritage: I *am* the LORD.'" [9]So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.

[10]And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [11]"Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land."

[12]And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I *am* of uncircumcised lips?"

[13]Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

The Family of Moses and Aaron

[14]These *are* the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, *were* Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben. [15]And the sons of Simeon *were* Jemuel,[a] Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These *are* the families of Simeon. [16]These *are* the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi *were* one hundred and thirty-seven. [17]The sons of Gershon *were* Libni and Shimi according to their families. [18]And the sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath *were* one hundred and thirty-three. [19]The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. These *are* the families of Levi according to their generations.

[20]Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram *were* one hundred and thirty-seven. [21]The sons of Izhar *were* Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. [22]And the sons of Uzziel *were* Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri. [23]Aaron took to himself Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. [24]And the sons of Korah *were* Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These are the families of the Korahites. [25]Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife; and she bore him Phinehas. These *are* the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families.

[26]These *are the same* Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." [27]These *are* the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These *are the same* Moses and Aaron.

6:3 [a]Hebrew *YHWH,* traditionally *Jehovah* **6:15** [a]Spelled *Nemuel* in Numbers 26:12

Aaron Is Moses' Spokesman

28 And it came to pass, on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt,
29 that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
"I *am* the LORD. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."
30 But Moses said before the LORD,
"Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?"

7 So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you *as* God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. 2 You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. 3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies *and* My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

6 Then Moses and Aaron did *so;* just as the LORD commanded them, so they did.
7 And Moses *was* eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

Aaron's Miraculous Rod

8 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 9 "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* let it become a serpent.'" 10 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

11 But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.
13 And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

The First Plague: Waters Become Blood

14 So the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart *is* hard; he refuses to let the people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. 16 And you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear!
17 Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. 18 And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river." '"

19 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of* wood and *pitchers of* stone.'" 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters

that *were* in the river were turned to blood. 21The fish that *were* in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

22Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. 23And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. 24So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. 25And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

The Second Plague: Frogs

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 2But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. 3So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. 4And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants." '"

5Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.'" 6So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

8Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the LORD that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD."

9And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, *that* they may remain in the river only."

10So he said, "Tomorrow." And he said, "*Let it be* according to your word, that you may know that *there is* no one like the LORD our God. 11And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only."

12Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. 13So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. 14They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. 15But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

The Third Plague: Lice

16So the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'" 17And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

18Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. 19Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This *is* the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said.

The Fourth Plague: Flies

20And the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 21Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms *of flies* on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms *of flies*, and also the ground on which they *stand*. 22And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there, in order that you may know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the land. 23I will make a difference[a] between

8:23 [a]Literally *set a ransom* (compare Exodus 9:4 and 11:7)

My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.' " 24And the LORD did so. Thick swarms *of flies* came into the house of Pharaoh, *into* his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms *of flies*.

25Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land."

26And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? 27We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He will command us."

28So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me."

29Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD, that the swarms *of flies* may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

30So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. 31And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms *of flies* from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. 32But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.

The Fifth Plague: Livestock Diseased

9 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 2For if you refuse to let *them* go, and still hold them, 3behold, the hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a very severe pestilence. 4And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all *that* belongs to the children of Israel." ' " 5Then the LORD appointed a set time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land."

6So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died. 7Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go.

The Sixth Plague: Boils

8So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. 9And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." 10Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered *them* toward heaven. And *they* caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast. 11And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. 12But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

The Seventh Plague: Hail

13Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me, 14for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that *there is* none like Me in all the earth. 15Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. 16But indeed for this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may show My power *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. 17As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. 18Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. 19Therefore send now *and* gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and

every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die." '"

20He who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. 21But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

22Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." 23And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. 26Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were,* there was no hail.

27And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time. The LORD *is* righteous, and my people and I *are* wicked. 28Entreat the LORD, that there may be no *more* mighty thundering and hail, for *it is* enough. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."

29So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth *is* the LORD's. 30But as for you and your servants, I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God."

31Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley *was* in the head and the flax *was* in bud. 32But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they *are* late crops.

33So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to the LORD; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth. 34And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

The Eighth Plague: Locusts

10 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, 2and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I *am* the LORD."

3So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 4Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. 5And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. 6They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians—which neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day.'" And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

7Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?"

8So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God. Who *are* the ones that are going?"

9And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD."

10Then he said to them, "The LORD had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. 11Not so! Go now, you *who are* men, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desired." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch
out your hand over the land of Egypt for
the locusts, that they may come upon
the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of
the land—all that the hail has left." 13 So
Moses stretched out his rod over the land
of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east
wind on the land all that day and all *that*
night. When it was morning, the east wind
brought the locusts. 14 And the locusts went
up over all the land of Egypt and rested on
all the territory of Egypt. *They were* very
severe; previously there had been no such
locusts as they, nor shall there be such
after them. 15 For they covered the face of
the whole earth, so that the land was dark-
ened; and they ate every herb of the land
and all the fruit of the trees which the hail
had left. So there remained nothing green
on the trees or on the plants of the field
throughout all the land of Egypt.

16 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and
Aaron in haste, and said, "I have sinned
against the LORD your God and against
you. 17 Now therefore, please forgive my sin
only this once, and entreat the LORD your
God, that He may take away from me this
death only." 18 So he went out from Pharaoh
and entreated the LORD. 19 And the LORD
turned a very strong west wind, which took
the locusts away and blew them into the
Red Sea. There remained not one locust
in all the territory of Egypt. 20 But the LORD
hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not
let the children of Israel go.

The Ninth Plague: Darkness

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch
out your hand toward heaven, that there
may be darkness over the land of Egypt,
darkness *which* may even be felt." 22 So Moses
stretched out his hand toward heaven, and
there was thick darkness in all the land of
Egypt three days. 23 They did not see one
another; nor did anyone rise from his place
for three days. But all the children of Israel
had light in their dwellings.

24 Then Pharaoh called to Moses and
said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks
and your herds be kept back. Let your little
ones also go with you."

25 But Moses said, "You must also give us
sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may
sacrifice to the LORD our God. 26 Our live-
stock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall
be left behind. For we must take some of
them to serve the LORD our God, and even
we do not know with what we must serve
the LORD until we arrive there."

27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's
heart, and he would not let them go. 28 Then
Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me!



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. | EXODUS 12:2

I always heard, "Life begins at forty." Not for Christians! Up until the Passover, when God redeemed His people by the power and the blood of the sacrificed lamb, the Jewish calendar was based upon agriculture. Their year began in the fall with the harvest. When they were delivered from Egyptian bondage, to illustrate the truth that redemption is a new beginning, the Lord commanded them to change their calendar. No more would the first month begin in the fall; now their year was marked from the day of their salvation. Life begins at Calvary! Praise God!

Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!"

29So Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will never see your face again."

Death of the Firstborn Announced

11 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets *you* go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether. 2Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold." 3And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

4Then Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; 5and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who *is* behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. 6Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it *before,* nor shall be like it again. 7But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.' 8And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, and all the people who follow you!' After that I will go out." Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.

9But the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not heed you, so that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." 10So Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

The Passover Instituted

12 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2"This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. 3Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. 4And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. 5Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. 6Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. 8Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. 9Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. 10You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. 11And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the LORD's Passover.

12'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. 13Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are.* And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

14'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. 15Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. 16On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which

everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. 17So you shall observe *the Feast of* Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. 18In the first *month,* on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land. 20You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'"

21Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover *lamb.* 22And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that *is* in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. 23For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike *you.* 24And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. 25It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. 26And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' 27that you shall say, 'It *is* the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'" So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. 28Then the children of Israel went away and did *so;* just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn

29And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who *was* in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. 30So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

The Exodus

31Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said. 32Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also."

33And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We *shall* all *be* dead." 34So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. 35Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. 36And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them *what they requested.* Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

37Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. 38A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock. 39And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

40Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt[a] *was* four hundred and thirty years. 41And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. 42It *is* a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This *is* that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

12:40 [a]Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint read *Egypt and Canaan.*

Passover Regulations

43And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This *is* the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. 44But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. 45A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. 46In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones. 47All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. 48And when a stranger dwells with you *and wants* to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. 49One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you."

50Thus all the children of Israel did; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. 51And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies.

The Firstborn Consecrated

13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine."

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

3And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this *place*. No leavened bread shall be eaten. 4On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. 5And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. 6Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day *there shall be* a feast to the LORD. 7Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. 8And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, '*This is done* because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.' 9It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. 10You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

The Law of the Firstborn

11"And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, 12that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males *shall be* the LORD's. 13But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. 14So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is* this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 15And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' 16It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

The Wilderness Way

17Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them *by* way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." 18So God led the people around *by* way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

19And Moses took the bones of Joseph

with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."[a]

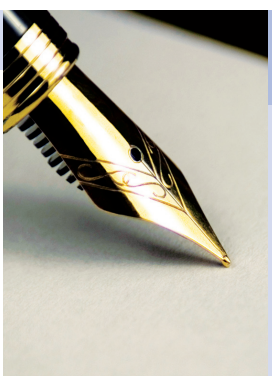
[20]So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. [21]And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. [22]He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night *from* before the people.

The Red Sea Crossing

14 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
[2]"Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. [3]For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They *are* bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' [4]Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD." And they did so.

[5]Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" [6]So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. [7]Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. [8]And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the

13:19 [a]Genesis 50:25



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? | EXODUS 14:10, 11

Hebrews 11:29 tells us that it was by faith that Israel crossed the Red Sea. I was taught that if you had real faith, you would not have fear. I was taught that intellectual doubts would militate against faith. It was a great weight lifted from my shoulders when I read that Israel crossed the Red Sea by faith in spite of their fears and doubts. It was very natural for them to fear when they looked behind and saw six hundred select chariots of Egypt rumbling towards them; it was very natural to entertain doubts when they used human reasoning to judge the wisdom of the decisions that had brought them to that place. How refreshing to my timid heart was the truth that I could have fear in my heart and doubt in my mind and still trust the Lord at the same time. This was one of the early passages that taught me that faith was a matter of the will and not a matter of the mind or emotions.

children of Israel went out with boldness. 9So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.

10And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. 11Then they said to Moses, "Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12*Is* this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For *it would have been* better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

13And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

15And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. 16But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea. 17And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. 18Then the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

19And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. 20So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness *to the one,* and it gave light by night *to the other,* so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

21Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry *land,* and the waters were divided. 22So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry *ground,* and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. 23And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

24Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. 25And He took off[a] their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

26Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." 27And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, *and* all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. 29But the children of Israel had walked on dry *land* in the midst of the sea, and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

30So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.

The Song of Moses

15 Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying:

"I will sing to the LORD,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!

14:25 [a]Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Syriac read *bound.*

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"

EXODUS 15:1

2 The LORD *is* my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation;
He *is* my God, and I will praise Him;
My father's God, and I will exalt Him.
3 The LORD *is* a man of war;
The LORD *is* His name.
4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea;
His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.
5 The depths have covered them;
They sank to the bottom like a stone.
6 "Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power;
Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces.
7 And in the greatness of Your excellence
You have overthrown those who rose against You;
You sent forth Your wrath;
It consumed them like stubble.
8 And with the blast of Your nostrils
The waters were gathered together;
The floods stood upright like a heap;

The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him.

EXODUS 15:2



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea . . . And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter . . . So he cried out to the Lord . . . [and] the waters were made sweet. . . . Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters. | EXODUS 15:22–27

There must be wonderful instruction in these six verses which describe the first six weeks of Israel's experience right after crossing the Red Sea by faith. At first there was "no water," then there was "bitter water," then there was "sweet water," and finally, they arrived at Elim where there were "twelve wells of water." I have known the dry place; I have experienced God's grace in using "a tree" to make my bitter water sweet. I have been embarrassed by my impatience for the waters of Elim. I wonder if these events describe the experience of those He is leading to the Promised Land? His ways are wonderful! Why does it take so long to embrace Him as the fountain of living waters?

The depths congealed in the heart of
the sea.
9 The enemy said, 'I will pursue,
I will overtake,
I will divide the spoil;
My desire shall be satisfied on them.
I will draw my sword,
My hand shall destroy them.'
10 You blew with Your wind,
The sea covered them;
They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11 "Who *is* like You, O LORD, among the
gods?
Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?
12 You stretched out Your right hand;
The earth swallowed them.
13 You in Your mercy have led forth
The people whom You have redeemed;
You have guided *them* in Your strength
To Your holy habitation.

14 "The people will hear *and* be afraid;
Sorrow will take hold of the
inhabitants of Philistia.
15 Then the chiefs of Edom will be
dismayed;
The mighty men of Moab,
Trembling will take hold of them;
All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt
away.
16 Fear and dread will fall on them;
By the greatness of Your arm
They will be *as* still as a stone,
Till Your people pass over, O LORD,
Till the people pass over
Whom You have purchased.
17 You will bring them in and plant them
In the mountain of Your inheritance,
In the place, O LORD, *which* You have
made
For Your own dwelling,
The sanctuary, O Lord, *which* Your
hands have established.

18 "The LORD shall reign forever and ever."

19 For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea.

The Song of Miriam

20 Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them:

"Sing to the LORD,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!"

And Miriam answered them: "Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"
EXODUS 15:21

Bitter Waters Made Sweet

22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23 Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah.[a] 24 And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25 So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet.

There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, 26 and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you."

27 Then they came to Elim, where there *were* twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.

Bread from Heaven

16 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day

15:23 [a]Literally *Bitter*

of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. 2Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat *and* when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

4Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. 5And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

6Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt. 7And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what *are* we, that you complain against us?" 8Also Moses said, "*This shall be seen* when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what *are* we? Your complaints *are* not against us but against the LORD."

9Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.'" 10Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.



REBECCA ISAACS BOWMAN • Homecoming Artist, *The Isaacs*

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." | EXODUS 16:4, 5

Have you ever had a restless night? A night during which worry and fear gripped your mind—not really worried about one certain thing, but just that uneasy feeling that disrupts your thoughts, your rest? One night I fell asleep fine, but sometime in the night I woke up with worry and concern. I searched the Scriptures for the comfort I needed. I began to read Exodus 16. Here we read of the Israelites, only 30 days into their journey and already complaining they were hungry. They just couldn't see the big picture—the picture Moses and Aaron could see—where they had come from and where God was leading them. This resonated with me. The Israelites complained to Moses, and the Lord heard their cries. The Lord sent bread from heaven (manna) and quail to feed them. Each evening quail covered the land and as the sun rose each morning, dew descended as manna. God told the Israelites to gather the quail and manna but only gather according to each one's needs; they were not to take more or less then what they needed for that day. Anything more than what they needed would spoil.

[11]And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [12]"I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.'"

[13]So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. [14]And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, *as* fine as frost on the ground. [15]So when the children of Israel saw *it,* they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it *was.*

And Moses said to them, "This *is* the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. [16]This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, *according to the* number of persons; let every man take for *those* who *are* in his tent.'"

[17]Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. [18]So when they measured *it* by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. [19]And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning." [20]Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. [21]So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.

[22]And so it was, on the sixth day, *that* they gathered twice as much bread, two

The Lord commanded the people to gather on the sixth day twice as much, so they could rest on the Sabbath. But only on the sixth night would the manna not spoil. Despite what God said, some of the Israelites were disobedient and took more than they needed, and it spoiled. What a lesson God was trying to show them!

Reading this caused my spirit to leap inside me! I began to see the provision of my Lord, how it rests upon His children. Can you imagine being in the wilderness, wondering where your next meal would come from, praying there would be enough to go around, enough to feed your family? Can you imagine witnessing that kind of power, love, and provision? I began to see how God had made provision for me along my journey, too.

I can get greedy from time to time. Some days I can't see the whole picture God has planned for my life. I can't see past my needs and desires. I realized that just as He tested the Israelites, God also tests me. I know that when I am tested my true character will surface. It can really prove what I am made of. Will I be obedient? Will I have the faith it takes to know God's provision will be sufficient? Will I ever learn to be totally dependent on God?

Today, God, I pray, that I see Your provision in my life. That I trust Your ways. That I find myself obedient to Your will. Father, remove any greed or lack of faith I have in You. Let me walk through each trial, no matter how dark and barren it may be, in total confidence that from day to day You have already made provision for me.

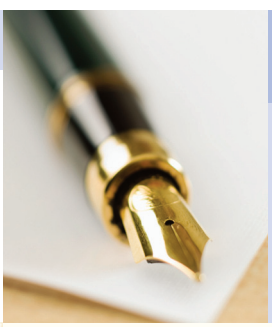
omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23Then he said to them, "This *is what* the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow *is* a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake *today,* and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'" 24So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. 25Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today *is* a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. 26Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

27Now it happened *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. 28And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? 29See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." 30So the people rested on the seventh day.

31And the house of Israel called its name Manna.[a] And it *was* like white coriander seed, and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

32Then Moses said, "This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'" 33And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." 34As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. 35And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. 36Now an omer *is* one-tenth of an ephah.

16:31 [a]Literally *What?* (compare Exodus 16:15)



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Also Moses said, "This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD." | EXODUS 16:8

There is much instruction studying the many murmurings of the children of Israel as they traveled through the wilderness. The words of Moses in Numbers 11:1 seem to strike at the essential evil of grumbling, "Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD." The essential evil of complaining seems to be a practical denial of God's sovereignty. When I complain, I must be saying, "God has nothing to do with this." This has been a real check on my attitude towards unpleasant circumstances. My wife still catches me now and then when I make comments of dissatisfaction about the weather, leftovers, the process of aging or the many things that seem to cross my purposes. If I really believed God is sovereign, it would be easy to give thanks, in and for all things.

Water from the Rock

17 Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was* no water for the people to drink. 2Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink."

So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"

3And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why *is* it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

4So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

5And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. 6Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink."

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7So he called the name of the place Massah[a] and Meribah,[b] because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Victory over the Amalekites

8Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." 10So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." 15And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner;[a] 16for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Jethro's Advice

18 And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people—that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. 2Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, 3with her two sons, of whom the name of one *was* Gershom (for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land")[a] 4and the name of the other *was* Eliezer[a] (for *he said,* "The God of my father *was* my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"); 5and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God. 6Now he had said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her."

7So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about *their* well-being, and they went into the tent. 8And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and *how* the LORD had delivered them. 9Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. 10And Jethro said, "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, *and* who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all the gods; for in the very

17:7 [a]Literally *Tempted* [b]Literally *Contention* **17:15** [a]Hebrew *YHWH Nissi* **18:3** [a]Compare Exodus 2:22 **18:4** [a]Literally *My God Is Help*

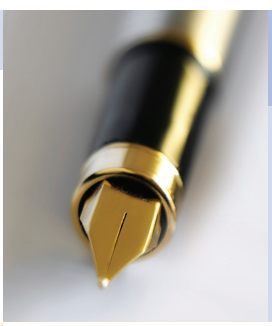
thing in which they behaved proudly, *He was* above them." [12]Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took[a] a burnt offering and *other* sacrifices *to offer* to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

[13]And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. [14]So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?"

[15]And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. [16]When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

[17]So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do *is* not good. [18]Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. [19]Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. [20]And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. [21]Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. [22]And let them judge the people at all times.

18:12 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Septuagint; Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *offered*.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. | EXODUS 17:12

I had always studied this passage in terms of Moses on the mountain and Joshua in the valley. I pictured the faith that works illustrated by Moses holding up the dead stick toward God and heaven, while Joshua and his men confronted the enemy in the valley. One day the Lord opened my eyes a little wider as I considered the ministry of Aaron and Hur. Moses on the mountain, I thought, pictured dependence upon the Lord, and Joshua in the valley pictured the actual conflict when we face our daily battles. I knew Moses needed Joshua and Joshua needed Moses. I had not considered the ministry of Aaron and Hur. What a precious ministry they had. They were the supporters of him who was helplessly dependent upon the Lord. I have had several Aarons and Hurs in my life. They were quietly there helping me when I was weary, to keep trusting the Lord. I have asked the Lord to use me to help support those who are tempted to surrender to the gravitational pull of this world. There are many Moseses on the mountain; there are many Joshuas in the valley. May God increase the tribes of Aaron and Hur!

Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you. 23If you do this thing, and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

24So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. 25And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 26So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves.

27Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own land.

Israel at Mount Sinai

19 In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came *to* the Wilderness of Sinai. 2For they had departed from Rephidim, had come *to* the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

3And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. 6And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

7So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. 9And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever."

So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

10Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. 11And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 12You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot *with an arrow;* whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain."

14So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. 15And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not come near *your* wives."

16Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. 17And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain[a] quaked greatly. 19And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. 20Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

21And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. 22Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them."

23But Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.'"

19:18 [a]Septuagint reads *all the people.*

24 Then the LORD said to him, "Away! Get
down and then come up, you and Aaron
with you. But do not let the priests and the
people break through to come up to the
LORD, lest He break out against them." 25 So
Moses went down to the people and spoke
to them.

The Ten Commandments

20 And God spoke all these words,
saying:

2 "I *am* the LORD your God, who brought
you out of the land of Egypt, out of
the house of bondage.
3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.
4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved
image—any likeness *of anything* that
is in heaven above, or that *is* in the
earth beneath, or that *is* in the water
under the earth; 5 you shall not bow
down to them nor serve them. For
I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous
God, visiting the iniquity of the
fathers upon the children to the
third and fourth *generations* of those
who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to
thousands, to those who love Me and
keep My commandments.
7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD
your God in vain, for the LORD will
not hold *him* guiltless who takes His
name in vain.
8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it



BILL GAITHER

You shall have no other gods before Me. | EXODUS 20:3

So much of our daily lives, whether we realize it or not, are spent trying to figure out exactly what it means to have no other gods before Him. Most of the other Ten Commandments are very straightforward. It is easy to determine between killing and not killing or stealing and not stealing. And in the Old Testament, having no other gods was even a bit more clear-cut than it is for us today because the idols of that day were man-made structures to which you could either bow or not bow. The choice between the two was clearly a choice between wrong and right.

Our lives today would be so much simpler if every decision came down to good or bad, wrong or right. But things become more complicated when the decision is between something good and something better. There is probably no more important scripture than Exodus 20:3 about learning to establish our priorities based on our unique calling because, after all, what we say yes and no to ultimately determines what or whom we serve.

Most of the disagreements that Gloria and I have had during our forty-eight years of marriage have come down to making "good" or "better" decisions. It always comes down to *priorities*. I cannot even estimate the number of wonderful causes we have had to say no to because, as wonderful as those causes were, we were called to something else that, for us, had to take priority. Those are difficult decisions that often require struggle and prayer.

Here is an example of one such scenario. Our city needs a revival. Our community is lost. Our food pantry is depleted. During recent years our part

holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do
all your work, 10but the seventh day *is*
the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In*
it you shall do no work: you, nor your
son, nor your daughter, nor your male
servant, nor your female servant, nor
your cattle, nor your stranger who
is within your gates. 11For *in* six days
the LORD made the heavens and the
earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them,
and rested the seventh day. Therefore
the LORD blessed the Sabbath day
and hallowed it.
12 "Honor your father and your mother,
that your days may be long upon
the land which the LORD your God is
giving you.
13 "You shall not murder.
14 "You shall not commit adultery.
15 "You shall not steal.
16 "You shall not bear false witness against
your neighbor.
17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's
house; you shall not covet your
neighbor's wife, nor his male servant,
nor his female servant, nor his ox,
nor his donkey, nor anything that *is*
your neighbor's."

The People Afraid of God's Presence

18Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it,* they trembled

of the country has been devastated by the tornadoes, trauma, flooding, crime, drought and economic crisis. I also need to add to that list of local needs the fact that our family needs their parents and grandparents at their concerts, graduations, weddings, births, recitals and ballgames. I cannot choose one without affecting the other.

Many people have asked me, "What do you do when you are not out performing or doing a video?" A lot of time is spent in the studio recording and developing new projects. But a large percentage of my time is spent sitting behind my desk saying yes or no. I must confess, I have had to say no to some wonderful opportunities. But to accept those opportunities would have meant saying no to even better opportunities, not the least of which is to be a good husband, dad, granddad, friend and neighbor to those I live with on a daily basis.

I truly understand it when I invite a high-profile friend of mine with a very public ministry, nationally and internationally, to be a part of an event that I believe has a strong sphere of influence, such as Family Fest, and he or she or they tell me, "Bill, I would love to do this in the worst way; however, I have so much on my plate right now, I wouldn't dare add more at this time." To which I say, "I totally understand! I have been there."

Trust me, it is no different for you, my friend. What you say no to and what you say yes to, at the end of the day, and month, and year will ultimately determine what following God's will meant for you. I can tell you, there is a lot of wisdom in Proverbs 2 about the benefits of serving Him only and seeking His constant input in our daily decisions: "For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding . . . Discretion will preserve you; understanding will keep you" (Prov. 2:6, 11)

and stood afar off. [19]Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

[20]And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." [21]So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God *was*.

The Law of the Altar

[22]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. [23]You shall not make *anything to be* with Me—gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves. [24]An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. [25]And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it. [26]Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.'

Where God is at the center of things, worship inevitably follows. Where there is no spirit of worship, there God has been dethroned and displaced.

SINCLAIR FERGUSON

The Law Concerning Servants

21 "Now these *are* the judgments which you shall set before them: [2]If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. [3]If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he *comes in* married, then his wife shall go out with him. [4]If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. [5]But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' [6]then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

[7]"And if a man sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. [8]If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. [9]And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. [10]If he takes another *wife*, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights. [11]And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without *paying* money.

The Law Concerning Violence

[12]"He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. [13]However, if he did not lie in wait, but God delivered *him* into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee.

[14]"But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.

[15]"And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

[16]"He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.

[17]"And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

[18]"If men contend with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with *his* fist, and he does not die but is confined to *his* bed, [19]if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck *him* shall be acquitted. He shall only pay *for* the loss of his time, and shall provide *for him* to be thoroughly healed.

[20]"And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. [21]Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he *is* his property.

[22]"If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be

punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges *determine*. [23]But if *any* harm follows, then you shall give life for life, [24]eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25]burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

[26]"If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. [27]And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

Animal Control Laws

[28]"If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox *shall be* acquitted. [29]But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. [30]If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. [31]Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. [32]If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

[33]"And if a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, [34]the owner of the pit shall make *it* good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead *animal* shall be his.

[35]"If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead *ox* they shall also divide. [36]Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own.

Responsibility for Property

22 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. [2]If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, *there shall be* no guilt for his bloodshed. [3]If the sun has risen on him, *there shall be* guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. [4]If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double.

[5]"If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

[6]"If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

[7]"If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. [8]If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges *to see* whether he has put his hand into his neighbor's goods.

[9]"For any kind of trespass, *whether it concerns* an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, *or* for any kind of lost thing which *another* claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; *and* whomever the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor. [10]If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing *it*, [11]*then* an oath of the LORD shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept *that*, and he shall not make *it* good. [12]But if, in fact, it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. [13]If it is torn to pieces *by a beast*, *then* he shall bring it as evidence, *and* he shall not make good what was torn.

[14]"And if a man borrows *anything* from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not *being* with it, he shall surely make *it* good. [15]If its owner *was* with it, he shall not make *it* good; if it *was* hired, it came for its hire.

Moral and Ceremonial Principles

[16]"If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely

pay the bride-price for her *to be* his wife.
17If her father utterly refuses to give her to
him, he shall pay money according to the
bride-price of virgins.
18"You shall not permit a sorceress to
live.
19"Whoever lies with an animal shall
surely be put to death.
20"He who sacrifices to *any* god, except
to the LORD only, he shall be utterly
destroyed.
21"You shall neither mistreat a stranger
nor oppress him, for you were strangers in
the land of Egypt.
22"You shall not afflict any widow or
fatherless child. 23If you afflict them in any
way, *and* they cry at all to Me, I will surely
hear their cry; 24and My wrath will become
hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your
wives shall be widows, and your children
fatherless.
25"If you lend money to *any of* My peo-
ple *who are* poor among you, you shall not
be like a moneylender to him; you shall not
charge him interest. 26If you ever take your
neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall
return it to him before the sun goes down.
27For that *is* his only covering, it *is* his gar-
ment for his skin. What will he sleep in?
And it will be that when he cries to Me, I
will hear, for I *am* gracious.
28"You shall not revile God, nor curse a
ruler of your people.
29"You shall not delay *to offer* the first
of your ripe produce and your juices. The
firstborn of your sons you shall give to
Me. 30Likewise you shall do with your oxen
and your sheep. It shall be with its mother
seven days; on the eighth day you shall
give it to Me.
31"And you shall be holy men to Me:
you shall not eat meat torn *by beasts* in the
field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

Justice for All

23 "You shall not circulate a false
report. Do not put your hand with
the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.
2You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor
shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn
aside after many to pervert *justice*. 3You
shall not show partiality to a poor man in
his dispute.
4"If you meet your enemy's ox or his
donkey going astray, you shall surely bring
it back to him again. 5If you see the donkey
of one who hates you lying under its bur-
den, and you would refrain from helping it,
you shall surely help him with it.
6"You shall not pervert the judgment of
your poor in his dispute. 7Keep yourself far
from a false matter; do not kill the inno-
cent and righteous. For I will not justify
the wicked. 8And you shall take no bribe,
for a bribe blinds the discerning and per-
verts the words of the righteous.
9"Also you shall not oppress a stranger,
for you know the heart of a stranger, because
you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

The Law of Sabbaths

10"Six years you shall sow your land and
gather in its produce, 11but the seventh
year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that
the poor of your people may eat; and what
they leave, the beasts of the field may eat.
In like manner you shall do with your vine-
yard *and* your olive grove. 12Six days you
shall do your work, and on the seventh day
you shall rest, that your ox and your don-
key may rest, and the son of your female
servant and the stranger may be refreshed.
13"And in all that I have said to you, be
circumspect and make no mention of the
name of other gods, nor let it be heard
from your mouth.

Three Annual Feasts

14"Three times you shall keep a feast to
Me in the year: 15You shall keep the Feast
of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleav-
ened bread seven days, as I commanded
you, at the time appointed in the month
of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt;
none shall appear before Me empty); 16and
the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your
labors which you have sown in the field;
and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of
the year, when you have gathered in *the
fruit of* your labors from the field.
17"Three times in the year all your males
shall appear before the Lord GOD.[a]
18"You shall not offer the blood of My
sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the
fat of My sacrifice remain until morning.

23:17 [a]Hebrew *YHWH*, usually translated *LORD*

19 The first of the firstfruits of your land you
shall bring into the house of the LORD your
God. You shall not boil a young goat in its
mother's milk.

The Angel and the Promises

20 "Behold, I send an Angel before you to
keep you in the way and to bring you into
the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware
of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke
Him, for He will not pardon your trans-
gressions; for My name *is* in Him. 22 But if
you indeed obey His voice and do all that I
speak, then I will be an enemy to your ene-
mies and an adversary to your adversaries.
23 For My Angel will go before you and bring
you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and
the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the
Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut
them off. 24 You shall not bow down to their
gods, nor serve them, nor do according
to their works; but you shall utterly over-
throw them and completely break down
their *sacred* pillars.

25 "So you shall serve the LORD your God,
and He will bless your bread and your
water. And I will take sickness away from
the midst of you. 26 No one shall suffer mis-
carriage or be barren in your land; I will
fulfill the number of your days.

27 "I will send My fear before you, I will
cause confusion among all the people to
whom you come, and will make all your
enemies turn *their* backs to you. 28 And I will
send hornets before you, which shall drive
out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the
Hittite from before you. 29 I will not drive
them out from before you in one year, lest
the land become desolate and the beasts
of the field become too numerous for
you. 30 Little by little I will drive them out
from before you, until you have increased,
and you inherit the land. 31 And I will set
your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea,
Philistia, and from the desert to the River.[a]
For I will deliver the inhabitants of the
land into your hand, and you shall drive
them out before you. 32 You shall make no
covenant with them, nor with their gods.
33 They shall not dwell in your land, lest
they make you sin against Me. For *if* you
serve their gods, it will surely be a snare
to you."

Israel Affirms the Covenant

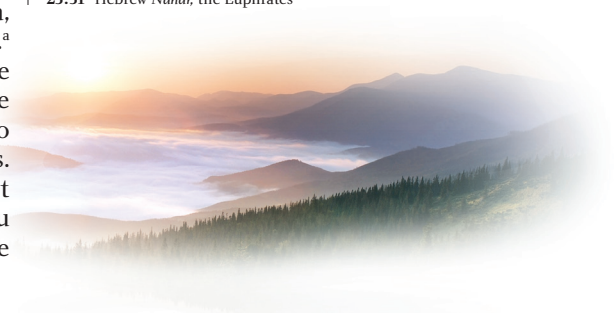
24 Now He said to Moses, "Come up
to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab
and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of
Israel, and worship from afar. 2 And Moses
alone shall come near the LORD, but they
shall not come near; nor shall the people
go up with him."

3 So Moses came and told the people
all the words of the LORD and all the judg-
ments. And all the people answered with
one voice and said, "All the words which
the LORD has said we will do." 4 And Moses
wrote all the words of the LORD. And he
rose early in the morning, and built an
altar at the foot of the mountain, and
twelve pillars according to the twelve
tribes of Israel. 5 Then he sent young men
of the children of Israel, who offered burnt
offerings and sacrificed peace offerings
of oxen to the LORD. 6 And Moses took half
the blood and put *it* in basins, and half the
blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 Then he
took the Book of the Covenant and read in
the hearing of the people. And they said,
"All that the LORD has said we will do, and
be obedient." 8 And Moses took the blood,
sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "This
is the blood of the covenant which the
LORD has made with you according to all
these words."

On the Mountain with God

9 Then Moses went up, also Aaron,
Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the
elders of Israel, 10 and they saw the God of
Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it
were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it
was like the very heavens in *its* clarity. 11 But
on the nobles of the children of Israel He
did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and
they ate and drank.

23:31 [a]Hebrew *Nahar,* the Euphrates



12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come
up to Me on the mountain and be there;
and I will give you tablets of stone, and the
law and commandments which I have writ-
ten, that you may teach them."
13 So Moses arose with his assistant
Joshua, and Moses went up to the moun-
tain of God. 14 And he said to the elders,
"Wait here for us until we come back to you.
Indeed, Aaron and Hur *are* with you. If any
man has a difficulty, let him go to them."
15 Then Moses went up into the mountain,
and a cloud covered the mountain.
16 Now the glory of the LORD rested on
Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six
days. And on the seventh day He called to
Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 The
sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a
consuming fire on the top of the moun-
tain in the eyes of the children of Israel.
18 So Moses went into the midst of the
cloud and went up into the mountain. And
Moses was on the mountain forty days and
forty nights.

Offerings for the Sanctuary

25 Then the LORD spoke to Moses,
saying: 2 "Speak to the children
of Israel, that they bring Me an offering.
From everyone who gives it willingly with
his heart you shall take My offering. 3 And
this *is* the offering which you shall take
from them: gold, silver, and bronze; 4 blue,
purple, and scarlet *thread,* fine linen, and
goats' *hair;* 5 ram skins dyed red, badger
skins, and acacia wood; 6 oil for the light,
and spices for the anointing oil and for the
sweet incense; 7 onyx stones, and stones to
be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.
8 And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I
may dwell among them. 9 According to all
that I show you, *that is,* the pattern of the
tabernacle and the pattern of all its fur-
nishings, just so you shall make *it*.

The Ark of the Testimony

10 "And they shall make an ark of aca-
cia wood; two and a half cubits *shall be* its
length, a cubit and a half its width, and a
cubit and a half its height. 11 And you shall
overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you
shall overlay it, and shall make on it a mold-
ing of gold all around. 12 You shall cast four
rings of gold for it, and put *them* in its four
corners; two rings *shall be* on one side, and
two rings on the other side. 13 And you shall
make poles *of* acacia wood, and overlay them
with gold. 14 You shall put the poles into the
rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark
may be carried by them. 15 The poles shall
be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be
taken from it. 16 And you shall put into the
ark the Testimony which I will give you.
17 "You shall make a mercy seat of pure
gold; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length
and a cubit and a half its width. 18 And you
shall make two cherubim of gold; of ham-
mered work you shall make them at the
two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one
cherub at one end, and the other cherub
at the other end; you shall make the cher-
ubim at the two ends of it *of one piece* with
the mercy seat. 20 And the cherubim shall
stretch out *their* wings above, covering the
mercy seat with their wings, and they shall
face one another; the faces of the cheru-
bim *shall be* toward the mercy seat. 21 You
shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark,
and in the ark you shall put the Testimony
that I will give you. 22 And there I will meet
with you, and I will speak with you from
above the mercy seat, from between the
two cherubim which *are* on the ark of the
Testimony, about everything which I will
give you in commandment to the children
of Israel.

The Table for the Showbread

23 "You shall also make a table of acacia
wood; two cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit
its width, and a cubit and a half its height.
24 And you shall overlay it with pure gold,
and make a molding of gold all around.
25 You shall make for it a frame of a hand-
breadth all around, and you shall make
a gold molding for the frame all around.
26 And you shall make for it four rings of
gold, and put the rings on the four corners
that *are* at its four legs. 27 The rings shall be
close to the frame, as holders for the poles
to bear the table. 28 And you shall make the
poles of acacia wood, and overlay them
with gold, that the table may be carried
with them. 29 You shall make its dishes, its
pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pour-
ing. You shall make them of pure gold.

30 And you shall set the showbread on the
table before Me always.

The Gold Lampstand

31 "You shall also make a lampstand of
pure gold; the lampstand shall be of ham-
mered work. Its shaft, its branches, its
bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and flowers
shall be *of one piece.* 32 And six branches
shall come out of its sides: three branches
of the lampstand out of one side, and
three branches of the lampstand out of
the other side. 33 Three bowls *shall be* made
like almond *blossoms* on one branch, *with*
an *ornamental* knob and a flower, and three
bowls made like almond *blossoms* on the
other branch, *with* an *ornamental* knob and
a flower—and so for the six branches that
come out of the lampstand. 34 On the lamp-
stand itself four bowls *shall be* made like
almond *blossoms, each with* its *ornamental*
knob and flower. 35 And *there shall be* a knob
under the *first* two branches of the same,
a knob under the *second* two branches of
the same, and a knob under the *third* two
branches of the same, according to the six
branches that extend from the lampstand.
36 Their knobs and their branches *shall*
be of one piece; all of it *shall be* one ham-
mered piece of pure gold. 37 You shall make
seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange
its lamps so that they give light in front of
it. 38 And its wick-trimmers and their trays
shall be of pure gold. 39 It shall be made of a
talent of pure gold, with all these utensils.
40 And see to it that you make *them* accord-
ing to the pattern which was shown you on
the mountain.

The Tabernacle

26 "Moreover you shall make the tab-
ernacle *with* ten curtains *of* fine
woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet
thread; with artistic designs of cherubim
you shall weave them. 2 The length of each
curtain *shall be* twenty-eight cubits, and
the width of each curtain four cubits.
And every one of the curtains shall have
the same measurements. 3 Five curtains
shall be coupled to one another, and *the*
other five curtains *shall be* coupled to one
another. 4 And you shall make loops of blue
yarn on the edge of the curtain on the sel-
vedge of *one* set, and likewise you shall do
on the outer edge of *the other* curtain of
the second set. 5 Fifty loops you shall make
in the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall
make on the edge of the curtain that *is* on
the end of the second set, that the loops
may be clasped to one another. 6 And you
shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple
the curtains together with the clasps, so
that it may be one tabernacle.

7 "You shall also make curtains of goats'
hair, to be a tent over the tabernacle. You
shall make eleven curtains. 8 The length
of each curtain *shall be* thirty cubits, and
the width of each curtain four cubits; and
the eleven curtains shall all have the same
measurements. 9 And you shall couple five
curtains by themselves and six curtains by
themselves, and you shall double over the
sixth curtain at the forefront of the tent.
10 You shall make fifty loops on the edge of
the curtain that is outermost in *one* set,
and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain
of the second set. 11 And you shall make
fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the
loops, and couple the tent together, that
it may be one. 12 The remnant that remains
of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain
that remains, shall hang over the back of
the tabernacle. 13 And a cubit on one side
and a cubit on the other side, of what
remains of the length of the curtains of
the tent, shall hang over the sides of the
tabernacle, on this side and on that side,
to cover it.

14 "You shall also make a covering of ram
skins dyed red for the tent, and a covering
of badger skins above that.

15 "And for the tabernacle you shall
make the boards of acacia wood, standing
upright. 16 Ten cubits *shall be* the length of



a board, and a cubit and a half *shall be* the
width of each board. 17Two tenons *shall be*
in each board for binding one to another.
Thus you shall make for all the boards of
the tabernacle. 18And you shall make the
boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards
for the south side. 19You shall make forty
sockets of silver under the twenty boards:
two sockets under each of the boards for
its two tenons. 20And for the second side of
the tabernacle, the north side, *there shall*
be twenty boards 21and their forty sockets
of silver: two sockets under each of the
boards. 22For the far side of the tabernacle,
westward, you shall make six boards. 23And
you shall also make two boards for the two
back corners of the tabernacle. 24They
shall be coupled together at the bottom
and they shall be coupled together at the
top by one ring. Thus it shall be for both
of them. They shall be for the two corners.
25So there shall be eight boards with their
sockets of silver—sixteen sockets—two
sockets under each of the boards.

26"And you shall make bars of acacia
wood: five for the boards on one side of
the tabernacle, 27five bars for the boards
on the other side of the tabernacle, and
five bars for the boards of the side of the
tabernacle, for the far side westward. 28The
middle bar shall pass through the midst
of the boards from end to end. 29You shall
overlay the boards with gold, make their
rings of gold *as* holders for the bars, and
overlay the bars with gold. 30And you shall
raise up the tabernacle according to its
pattern which you were shown on the
mountain.

31"You shall make a veil woven of blue,
purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven
linen. It shall be woven with an artistic
design of cherubim. 32You shall hang it
upon the four pillars of acacia *wood* over-
laid with gold. Their hooks *shall be* gold,
upon four sockets of silver. 33And you shall
hang the veil from the clasps. Then you
shall bring the ark of the Testimony in
there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a
divider for you between the holy *place* and
the Most Holy. 34You shall put the mercy
seat upon the ark of the Testimony in the
Most Holy. 35You shall set the table outside
the veil, and the lampstand across from the
table on the side of the tabernacle toward
the south; and you shall put the table on
the north side.

36"You shall make a screen for the door
of the tabernacle, *woven of* blue, purple,
and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen,
made by a weaver. 37And you shall make for
the screen five pillars of acacia *wood,* and
overlay them with gold; their hooks *shall*
be gold, and you shall cast five sockets of
bronze for them.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

27 "You shall make an altar of aca-
cia wood, five cubits long and five
cubits wide—the altar shall be square—
and its height *shall be* three cubits. 2You
shall make its horns on its four corners;
its horns shall be of one piece with it. And
you shall overlay it with bronze. 3Also you
shall make its pans to receive its ashes, and
its shovels and its basins and its forks and
its firepans; you shall make all its utensils
of bronze. 4You shall make a grate for it,
a network of bronze; and on the network
you shall make four bronze rings at its four
corners. 5You shall put it under the rim of
the altar beneath, that the network may be
midway up the altar. 6And you shall make
poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood,
and overlay them with bronze. 7The poles
shall be put in the rings, and the poles shall
be on the two sides of the altar to bear it.
8You shall make it hollow with boards; as it
was shown you on the mountain, so shall
they make *it.*

The Court of the Tabernacle

9"You shall also make the court of the
tabernacle. For the south side *there shall*
be hangings for the court *made of* fine
woven linen, one hundred cubits long for
one side. 10And its twenty pillars and their
twenty sockets *shall be* bronze. The hooks
of the pillars and their bands *shall be* silver.
11Likewise along the length of the north
side *there shall be* hangings one hundred
cubits long, with its twenty pillars and their
twenty sockets of bronze, and the hooks of
the pillars and their bands of silver.

12"And along the width of the court
on the west side *shall be* hangings of fifty
cubits, with their ten pillars and their ten

sockets. 13The width of the court on the east side *shall be* fifty cubits. 14The hangings on *one* side *of the gate shall be* fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets. 15And on the other side *shall be* hangings of fifteen *cubits, with* their three pillars and their three sockets.

16"For the gate of the court *there shall be* a screen twenty cubits long, *woven of* blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It *shall have* four pillars and four sockets. 17All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver; their hooks *shall be* of silver and their sockets of bronze. 18The length of the court *shall be* one hundred cubits, the width fifty throughout, and the height five cubits, *made of* fine woven linen, and its sockets of bronze. 19All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, *shall be* of bronze.

The Care of the Lampstand

20"And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. 21In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which *is* before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. *It shall be* a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.

Garments for the Priesthood

28 "Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron *and* Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. 3So you shall speak to all *who are* gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. 4And these *are* the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod,[a] a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.

The Ephod

5"They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and the fine linen, 6and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, *and* scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, artistically worked. 7It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and *so* it shall be joined together. 8And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which *is* on it, shall be of the same workmanship, *made of* gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen.

9"Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: 10six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth. 11With the work of an engraver in stone, *like* the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold. 12And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod *as* memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial. 13You shall also make settings of gold, 14and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings.

Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us.

MARTIN LUTHER

The Breastplate

15"You shall make the breastplate of judgment. Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, you shall make it. 16It shall be doubled into a square: a span *shall be* its length, and a span *shall be* its width. 17And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: *The first* row *shall be* a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald;

28:4 [a]That is, an ornamented vest

this shall be the first row; [18]the second row *shall be* a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; [19]the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; [20]and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. [21]And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes.

[22]"You shall make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of pure gold. [23]And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. [24]Then you shall put the two braided *chains* of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; [25]and the *other* two ends of the two braided *chains* you shall fasten to the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front.

[26]"You shall make two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which is on the inner side of the ephod. [27]And two *other* rings of gold you shall make, and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. [28]They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, using a blue cord, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod.

[29]"So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy *place,* as a memorial before the LORD continually. [30]And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim,[a] and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.

Other Priestly Garments

[31]"You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. [32]There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear. [33]And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: [34]a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. [35]And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy *place* before the LORD and when he comes out, that he may not die.

[36]"You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, *like* the engraving of a signet:

HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

[37]And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. [38]So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

[39]"You shall skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen *thread,* you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work.

[40]"For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty. [41]So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests. [42]And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs. [43]They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they come into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy *place,* that they do not incur iniquity and die. *It shall be* a statute forever to him and his descendants after him.

Aaron and His Sons Consecrated

29 "And this is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests: Take one young bull and

28:30 [a]Literally *the Lights and the Perfections* (compare Leviticus 8:8)

two rams without blemish, [2]and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (you shall make them of wheat flour). [3]You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams.

[4]"And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water. [5]Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. [6]You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. [7]And you shall take the anointing oil, pour *it* on his head, and anoint him. [8]Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. [9]And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.

[10]"You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull. [11]Then you shall kill the bull before the LORD, *by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. [12]You shall take *some* of the blood of the bull and put *it* on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the base of the altar. [13]And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them, and burn *them* on the altar. [14]But the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It *is* a sin offering.

[15]"You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram; [16]and you shall kill the ram, and you shall take its blood and sprinkle *it* all around on the altar. [17]Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its entrails and its legs, and put *them* with its pieces and with its head. [18]And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It *is* a burnt offering to the LORD; it *is* a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

[19]"You shall also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. [20]Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put *it* on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. [21]And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

[22]"Also you shall take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the right thigh (for it *is* a ram of consecration), [23]one loaf of bread, one cake *made with* oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that *is* before the LORD; [24]and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. [25]You shall receive them back from their hands and burn *them* on the altar as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the LORD. It *is* an offering made by fire to the LORD.

[26]"Then you shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration and wave it *as* a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be your portion. [27]And from the ram of the consecration you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering which is waved, and the thigh of the heave offering which is raised, of *that* which *is* for Aaron and of *that* which is for his sons. [28]It shall be from the children of Israel *for* Aaron and his sons by a statute forever. For it is a heave offering; it shall be a heave offering from the children of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, *that is,* their heave offering to the LORD.

29"And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. 30That son who becomes priest in his place shall put them on for seven days, when he enters the tabernacle of meeting to minister in the holy *place.*

31"And you shall take the ram of the consecration and boil its flesh in the holy place. 32Then Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that *is* in the basket, *by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 33They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate *and* to sanctify them; but an outsider shall not eat *them,* because they *are* holy. 34And if any of the flesh of the consecration offerings, or of the bread, remains until the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten, because it *is* holy.

35"Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. Seven days you shall consecrate them. 36And you shall offer a bull every day *as* a sin offering for atonement. You shall cleanse the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it. 37Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and sanctify it. And the altar shall be most holy. Whatever touches the altar must be holy.[a]

The Daily Offerings

38"Now this *is* what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. 39One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. 40With the one lamb shall be one-tenth *of an ephah* of flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine *as* a drink offering. 41And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 42*This shall be* a continual burnt offering throughout your generations *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you. 43And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and *the tabernacle* shall be sanctified by My glory. 44So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. 45I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. 46And they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I *am* the LORD their God.

The Altar of Incense

30 "You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. 2A cubit *shall be* its length and a cubit its width—it shall be square—and two cubits *shall be* its height. Its horns *shall be* of one piece with it. 3And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. 4Two gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place *them* on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. 5You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 6And you shall put it before the veil that *is* before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that *is* over the Testimony, where I will meet with you.

7"Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. 8And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. 9You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. 10And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It *is* most holy to the LORD."

The Ransom Money

11Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 12"When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself

29:37 [a]Compare Numbers 4:15 and Haggai 2:11–13

to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when *you* number them. 13This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel *is* twenty gerahs). The half-shekel *shall be* an offering to the LORD. 14Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD. 15The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when *you* give an offering to the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves. 16And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves."

The Bronze Laver

17Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 18"You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, 19for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. 20When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. 21So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them—to him and his descendants throughout their generations."

The Holy Anointing Oil

22Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 23"Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred *shekels* of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty *shekels*), two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet-smelling cane, 24five hundred *shekels* of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. 25And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. 26With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; 27the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; 28the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. 29You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy.[a] 30And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister to Me as priests.

31"And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. 32It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make *any other* like it, according to its composition. It *is* holy, *and* it shall be holy to you. 33Whoever compounds *any* like it, or whoever puts *any* of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people.'"

The Incense

34And the LORD said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with *these* sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. 35You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, *and* holy. 36And you shall beat *some* of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. 37But *as for* the incense which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the LORD. 38Whoever makes *any* like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people."

Artisans for Building the Tabernacle

31 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship, 4to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, 5in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all *manner of* workmanship.

6"And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the

30:29 [a]Compare Numbers 4:15 and Haggai 2:11–13

hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you:
7 the tabernacle of meeting, the ark of the Testimony and the mercy seat that *is* on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle—
8 the table and its utensils, the pure *gold* lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense,
9 the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base—
10 the garments of ministry,[a] the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests,
11 and the anointing oil and sweet incense for the holy *place*. According to all that I have commanded you they shall do."

But he said: "It is not the noise of the shout of victory, nor the noise of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing I hear."
EXODUS 32:18

The Sabbath Law

12 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that *you* may know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you.
14 You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for *it is* holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does *any* work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.
15 Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.
16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant.
17 It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'"
18 And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

The Gold Calf

32 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."
2 And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me."
3 So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron.
4 And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.

Then they said, "This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"
5 So when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD."
6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.
7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*.
8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'"
9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people!
10 Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."
11 Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?
12 Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to con-

31:10 [a] Or *woven garments*

sume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. 13Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.'"[a] 14So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

15And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony *were* in his hand. The tablets *were* written on both sides; on the one *side* and on the other they were written. 16Now the tablets *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God engraved on the tablets.

17And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "*There is* a noise of war in the camp."

18But he said:

"*It is* not the noise of the shout of victory,
Nor the noise of the cry of defeat,
But the sound of singing I hear."

19So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf *and* the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. 20Then he took the calf which they had made, burned *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder; and he scattered *it* on the water and made the children of Israel drink *it*. 21And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought *so* great a sin upon them?"

22So Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people, that they *are set* on evil. 23For they said to me, 'Make us gods that shall go before us; *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 24And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them break *it* off.' So they gave *it* to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out."

25Now when Moses saw that the people *were* unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to *their* shame among their enemies), 26then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever *is* on the LORD's side—*come* to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. 27And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'" 28So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. 29Then Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother."

30Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." 31Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! 32Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written."

33And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. 34Now therefore, go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin."

35So the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.

The Command to Leave Sinai

33 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Depart *and* go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.' 2And I will send *My* Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the

32:13 [a]Genesis 13:15 and 22:17

And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth."

EXODUS 33:14–16

Whenever we go through anything—the desert, the valley, the wilderness, the alien land—it is to get to the other side. And to get there with greater character, more wisdom, a deeper trust in the One who leads us through. *Through* is the operative word.

All things are to deepen and intensify the relationship with the One who leads us; it's the companionship *during* these experiences that is important.



Hivite and the Jebusite. [3]*Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you *are* a stiff-necked people."

[4]And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. [5]For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You *are* a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'" [6]So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.

Moses Meets with the LORD

[7]Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass *that* everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which *was* outside the camp. [8]So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose, and each man stood *at* his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. [9]And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the* LORD talked with Moses. [10]All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at* the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man *in* his tent door. [11]So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

The Promise of God's Presence

[12]Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' [13]Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation *is* Your people."

[14]And He said, "My Presence will go *with you,* and I will give you rest."

15 Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence
does not go *with us,* do not bring us up from
here. 16 For how then will it be known that
Your people and I have found grace in Your
sight, except You go with us? So we shall
be separate, Your people and I, from all the
people who *are* upon the face of the earth."
17 So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also
do this thing that you have spoken; for you
have found grace in My sight, and I know
you by name."
18 And he said, "Please, show me Your
glory."
19 Then He said, "I will make all My
goodness pass before you, and I will pro-
claim the name of the LORD before you. I
will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,
and I will have compassion on whom I will
have compassion." 20 But He said, "You
cannot see My face; for no man shall see
Me, and live." 21 And the LORD said, "Here
is a place by Me, and you shall stand on
the rock. 22 So it shall be, while My glory
passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of
the rock, and will cover you with My hand
while I pass by. 23 Then I will take away My
hand, and you shall see My back; but My
face shall not be seen."

Moses Makes New Tablets

34 And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut
two tablets of stone like the first
ones, and I will write on *these* tablets the
words that were on the first tablets which
you broke. 2 So be ready in the morning,
and come up in the morning to Mount
Sinai, and present yourself to Me there
on the top of the mountain. 3 And no man
shall come up with you, and let no man
be seen throughout all the mountain; let
neither flocks nor herds feed before that
mountain."
4 So he cut two tablets of stone like the
first *ones.* Then Moses rose early in the
morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the
LORD had commanded him; and he took in
his hand the two tablets of stone.
5 Now the LORD descended in the cloud
and stood with him there, and proclaimed
the name of the LORD. 6 And the LORD
passed before him and proclaimed, "The
LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious,
longsuffering, and abounding in goodness
and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands,
forgiving iniquity and transgression and
sin, by no means clearing *the guilty,* visit-
ing the iniquity of the fathers upon the
children and the children's children to the
third and the fourth generation."
8 So Moses made haste and bowed his
head toward the earth, and worshiped.
9 Then he said, "If now I have found
grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord,
I pray, go among us, even though we *are*
a stiff-necked people; and pardon our
iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your
inheritance."

The Covenant Renewed

10 And He said: "Behold, I make a cov-
enant. Before all your people I will do
marvels such as have not been done in all
the earth, nor in any nation; and all the
people among whom you *are* shall see the
work of the LORD. For it *is* an awesome
thing that I will do with you. 11 Observe
what I command you this day. Behold, I am
driving out from before you the Amorite
and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the
Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.
12 Take heed to yourself, lest you make a
covenant with the inhabitants of the land
where you are going, lest it be a snare in
your midst. 13 But you shall destroy their
altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut
down their wooden images 14 (for you shall
worship no other god, for the LORD, whose
name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God), 15 lest
you make a covenant with the inhabit-
ants of the land, and they play the harlot
with their gods and make sacrifice to their
gods, and *one of them* invites you and you
eat of his sacrifice, 16 and you take of his
daughters for your sons, and his daughters
play the harlot with their gods and make
your sons play the harlot with their gods.
17 "You shall make no molded gods for
yourselves.
18 "The Feast of Unleavened Bread you
shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleav-
ened bread, as I commanded you, in the
appointed time of the month of Abib; for
in the month of Abib you came out from
Egypt.
19 "All that open the womb *are* Mine, and
every male firstborn among your livestock,

Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth." So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

EXODUS 33:15–17

God had already promised Israel the land flowing with milk and honey. He had already promised to drive out their enemies. But Moses knew that none of it mattered without Him. The idea that God would not be with him was unfathomable. "If I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight," he pleaded with the Lord, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us from here." Moses knew they needed the Lord more than victory over their enemies, more than an abundance of milk and honey, more than the land promised to their ancestors. How could they go on without the presence of God? How would they live if they didn't have the Lord to show them the way? Moses knew that all was lost without the presence of the Lord. That truth would be echoed thousands of generations later in one of the most enduring hymns of the Christian faith, "Be Thou My Vision."

The hymn traces its origins to an eighth-century Irish poem called "Rop tú mo Baile." The tune of "Be Thou My Vision" has its roots in Irish folk piece called "Slane," named for a hill with deep significance to Irish Christians. On Slane Hill, around A.D. 433, St. Patrick was said to have lit a Paschal fire to celebrate Easter, but he did so in direct defiance of a royal edict by High King Logaire of Tara. Logaire had forbidden anyone to ignite a fire before he officially announced the start of the spring pagan festival by lighting a fire on Tara Hill. Logaire so admired Patrick's dedication that he allowed him to remain in Ireland and continue in the work he had set out from Scotland to do.

St. Patrick had been raised by a Christian family in Scotland, but as a teenager he had been kidnapped by pirates and brought to Ireland as a slave. In these dire circumstances, he saw his own sin and turned to the Lord, yielding his life to Him. Years later, after he had managed to return home, he had a vision of an Irish man begging him to deliver the gospel to Ireland. He returned to the land of his captivity, this time to offer its inhabitants the freedom from sin that comes through knowing Christ. St. Patrick would go on to convert thousands to Christianity, planting churches, and igniting a fire of faith in Ireland that has yet to burn out. It was in his legacy that "Slane" and "Rop tú mo Baile" were composed centuries ago. But it wasn't until 1905 that Mary E. Byrne translated it to English. Then in 1912, Eleanor H. Hull versified the text, creating the metrical, four-stanza version that we sing today.

Be Thou My Vision

Eighth Century

1. Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

2. Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

3. Be Thou my battle shield, sword for the fight;
Be Thou my dignity, Thou my delight;
Thou my soul's shelter, Thou my high tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O power of my power.

4. Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

5. High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

whether ox or sheep. [20]But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem *him,* then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem.

"And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.

[21]"Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.

[22]"And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end.

[23]"Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel. [24]For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.

[25]"You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven, nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover be left until morning.

[26]"The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."

[27]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." [28]So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.[a]

The Shining Face of Moses

[29]Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony *were* in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. [30]So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. [31]Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. [32]Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. [33]And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. [34]But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. [35]And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

Sabbath Regulations

35 Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, "These *are* the words which the LORD has commanded *you* to do: [2]Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. [3]You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

Offerings for the Tabernacle

[4]And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded, saying: [5]'Take from among you an offering to the LORD. Whoever *is* of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the LORD: gold, silver, and bronze; [6]blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* fine linen, and goats' *hair;* [7]ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; [8]oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; [9]onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.

Articles of the Tabernacle

[10]'All *who are* gifted artisans among you shall come and make all that the LORD has commanded: [11]the tabernacle, its tent, its covering, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; [12]the ark and its poles, *with* the mercy seat, and the veil of the covering; [13]the table and its poles, all its utensils, and the showbread; [14]also the lampstand for the light, its utensils, its lamps, and the oil for the light; [15]the

34:28 [a]Literally *Ten Words*

incense altar, its poles, the anointing oil, the sweet incense, and the screen for the door at the entrance of the tabernacle; 16the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles, all its utensils, *and* the laver and its base; 17the hangings of the court, its pillars, their sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; 18the pegs of the tabernacle, the pegs of the court, and their cords; 19the garments of ministry,[a] for ministering in the holy *place*—the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.'"

The Tabernacle Offerings Presented

20And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 21Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, *and* they brought the LORD's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. 22They came, both men and women, as many as had a willing heart, *and* brought earrings and nose rings, rings and necklaces, all jewelry of gold, that is, every man who *made* an offering of gold to the LORD. 23And every man, with whom was found blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* fine linen, and goats' *hair,* red skins of rams, and badger skins, brought *them.* 24Everyone who offered an offering of silver or bronze brought the LORD's offering. And everyone with whom was found acacia wood for any work of the service, brought *it.* 25All the women *who were* gifted artisans spun yarn with their hands, and brought what they had spun, of blue, purple, *and* scarlet, and fine linen. 26And all the women whose hearts stirred with wisdom spun yarn of goats' *hair.* 27The rulers brought onyx stones, and the stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate, 28and spices and oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. 29The children of Israel brought a freewill offering to the LORD, all the men and women whose hearts were willing to bring *material* for all kinds of work which the LORD, by the hand of Moses, had commanded to be done.

The Artisans Called by God

30And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, 32to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, 33in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship.

34"And He has put in his heart the ability to teach, *in* him and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35He has filled them with skill to do all manner of work of the engraver and the designer and the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine linen, and of the weaver—those who do every work and those who design artistic works.

36 "And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the LORD has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the LORD has commanded."

The People Give More than Enough

2Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work. 3And they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. 4Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, 5and they spoke to Moses, saying, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded *us* to do."

6So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary." And the people were restrained from bringing, 7for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done—indeed too much.

35:19 [a]Or *woven garments*

Building the Tabernacle

[8]Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked on the tabernacle made ten curtains woven of fine linen, and of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread; with* artistic designs of cherubim they made them. [9]The length of each curtain *was* twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the curtains *were* all the same size. [10]And he coupled five curtains to one another, and *the other* five curtains he coupled to one another. [11]He made loops of blue *yarn* on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of one set; likewise he did on the outer edge of *the other* curtain of the second set. [12]Fifty loops he made on one curtain, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain on the end of the second set; the loops held one *curtain* to another. [13]And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains to one another with the clasps, that it might be one tabernacle.

[14]He made curtains of goats' *hair* for the tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains. [15]The length of each curtain *was* thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the eleven curtains *were* the same size. [16]He coupled five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. [17]And he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain of the second set. [18]He also made fifty bronze clasps to couple the tent together, that it might be one. [19]Then he made a covering for the tent of ram skins dyed red, and a covering of badger skins above *that*.

[20]For the tabernacle he made boards of acacia wood, standing upright. [21]The length of each board *was* ten cubits, and the width of each board a cubit and a half. [22]Each board had two tenons for binding one to another. Thus he made for all the boards of the tabernacle. [23]And he made boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. [24]Forty sockets of silver he made to go under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. [25]And for the other side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made twenty boards [26]and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. [27]For the west side of the tabernacle he made six boards. [28]He also made two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. [29]And they were coupled at the bottom and coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus he made both of them for the two corners. [30]So there were eight boards and their sockets—sixteen sockets of silver—two sockets under each of the boards.

[31]And he made bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, [32]five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle on the far side westward. [33]And he made the middle bar to pass through the boards from one end to the other. [34]He overlaid the boards with gold, made their rings of gold *to be* holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

[35]And he made a veil of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen; it was worked *with* an artistic design of cherubim. [36]He made for it four pillars of acacia *wood,* and overlaid them with gold, with their hooks of gold; and he cast four sockets of silver for them.

[37]He also made a screen for the tabernacle door, of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, made by a weaver, [38]and its five pillars with their hooks. And he overlaid their capitals and their rings with gold, but their five sockets *were* bronze.

Making the Ark of the Testimony

37 Then Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *was* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. [2]He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and made a molding of gold all around it. [3]And he cast for it four rings of gold *to be set* in its four corners: two rings on one side, and two rings on the other side of it. [4]He made poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. [5]And he put the poles into the rings at the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. [6]He also made the mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *was* its length and a cubit and a half its width. [7]He made two cherubim of beaten gold; he

made them of one piece at the two ends of the mercy seat: [8]one cherub at one end on this side, and the other cherub at the *other* end on that side. He made the cherubim at the two ends *of one piece* with the mercy seat. [9]The cherubim spread out *their* wings above, *and* covered the mercy seat with their wings. They faced one another; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat.

Making the Table for the Showbread

[10]He made the table of acacia wood; two cubits *was* its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. [11]And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made a molding of gold all around it. [12]Also he made a frame of a handbreadth all around it, and made a molding of gold for the frame all around it. [13]And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that *were* at its four legs. [14]The rings were close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. [15]And he made the poles of acacia wood to bear the table, and overlaid them with gold. [16]He made of pure gold the utensils which were on the table: its dishes, its cups, its bowls, and its pitchers for pouring.

Making the Gold Lampstand

[17]He also made the lampstand of pure gold; of hammered work he made the lampstand. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and its flowers were of the same piece. [18]And six branches came out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. [19]There were three bowls made like almond *blossoms* on one branch, with an *ornamental* knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond *blossoms* on the other branch, with an *ornamental* knob and a flower—and so for the six branches coming out of the lampstand. [20]And on the lampstand itself *were* four bowls made like almond *blossoms, each with* its *ornamental* knob and flower. [21]*There was* a knob under the *first* two branches of the same, a knob under the *second* two branches of the same, and a knob under the *third* two branches of the same, according to the six branches extending from it. [22]Their knobs and their branches were of one piece; all of it *was* one hammered piece of pure gold. [23]And he made its seven lamps, its wick-trimmers, and its trays of pure gold. [24]Of a talent of pure gold he made it, with all its utensils.

Making the Altar of Incense

[25]He made the incense altar of acacia wood. Its length *was* a cubit and its width a cubit—*it was* square—and two cubits *was* its height. Its horns were *of one piece* with it. [26]And he overlaid it with pure gold: its top, its sides all around, and its horns. He also made for it a molding of gold all around it. [27]He made two rings of gold for it under its molding, by its two corners on both sides, as holders for the poles with which to bear it. [28]And he made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold.

Making the Anointing Oil and the Incense

[29]He also made the holy anointing oil and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the perfumer.

Making the Altar of Burnt Offering

38 He made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood; five cubits *was* its length and five cubits its width—*it was* square—and its height *was* three cubits. [2]He made its horns on its four corners; the horns were *of one piece* with it. And he overlaid it with bronze. [3]He made all the utensils for the altar: the pans, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the firepans; all its utensils he made of bronze. [4]And



he made a grate of bronze network for the altar, under its rim, midway from the bottom. 5He cast four rings for the four corners of the bronze grating, *as* holders for the poles. 6And he made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with bronze. 7Then he put the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to bear it. He made the altar hollow with boards.

Making the Bronze Laver

8He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Making the Court of the Tabernacle

9Then he made the court on the south side; the hangings of the court *were of* fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long. 10There *were* twenty pillars for them, with twenty bronze sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver. 11On the north side *the hangings were* one hundred cubits *long,* with twenty pillars and their twenty bronze sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver. 12And on the west side *there were* hangings of fifty cubits, with ten pillars and their ten sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver. 13For the east side *the hangings were* fifty cubits. 14The hangings of one side *of the gate were* fifteen cubits *long, with* their three pillars and their three sockets, 15and the same for the other side of the court gate; on this side and that *were* hangings of fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets. 16All the hangings of the court all around *were of* fine woven linen. 17The sockets for the pillars *were* bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver, and the overlay of their capitals *was* silver; and all the pillars of the court had bands of silver. 18The screen for the gate of the court *was* woven of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine woven linen. The length *was* twenty cubits, and the height along its width *was* five cubits, corresponding to the hangings of the court. 19And *there were* four pillars *with* their four sockets of bronze; their hooks *were* silver, and the overlay of their capitals and their bands *was* silver. 20All the pegs of the tabernacle, and of the court all around, *were* bronze.

Materials of the Tabernacle

21This is the inventory of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the Testimony, which was counted according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.

22Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD had commanded Moses. 23And with him *was* Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and designer, a weaver of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine linen.

24All the gold that was used in all the work of the holy *place,* that is, the gold of the offering, was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 25And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation *was* one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: 26a bekah for each man (*that is,* half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone included in the numbering from twenty years old and above, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty *men.* 27And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket. 28Then from the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five *shekels* he made hooks for the pillars, overlaid their capitals, and made bands for them.

29The offering of bronze *was* seventy talents and two thousand four hundred shekels. 30And with it he made the sockets for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, the bronze altar, the bronze grating for it,

and all the utensils for the altar, [31]the sockets for the court all around, the bases for the court gate, all the pegs for the tabernacle, and all the pegs for the court all around.

Making the Garments of the Priesthood

39 Of the blue, purple, and scarlet *thread* they made garments of ministry,[a] for ministering in the holy *place,* and made the holy garments for Aaron, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Ephod

[2]He made the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine woven linen. [3]And they beat the gold into thin sheets and cut *it into* threads, to work *it* in *with* the blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and the fine linen, *into* artistic designs. [4]They made shoulder straps for it to couple *it* together; it was coupled together at its two edges. [5]And the intricately woven band of his ephod that *was* on it *was* of the same workmanship, *woven of* gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and *of* fine woven linen, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[6]And they set onyx stones, enclosed in settings of gold; they were engraved, as signets are engraved, with the names of the sons of Israel. [7]He put them on the shoulders of the ephod *as* memorial stones for the sons of Israel, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Breastplate

[8]And he made the breastplate, artistically woven like the workmanship of the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine woven linen. [9]They made the breastplate square by doubling it; a span *was* its length and a span its width when doubled. [10]And they set in it four rows of stones: a row with a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald was the first row; [11]the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; [12]the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; [13]the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. *They were* enclosed in settings of gold in their mountings. [14]*There were* twelve stones according to the names of the sons of Israel: according to their names, *engraved like* a signet, each one with its own name according to the twelve tribes. [15]And they made chains for the breastplate at the ends, like braided cords of pure gold. [16]They also made two settings of gold and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. [17]And they put the two braided *chains* of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate. [18]The two ends of the two braided *chains* they fastened in the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front. [19]And they made two rings of gold and put *them* on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which *was* on the inward side of the ephod. [20]They made two *other* gold rings and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. [21]And they bound the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that it would be above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate would not come loose from the ephod, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Other Priestly Garments

[22]He made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. [23]And *there was* an opening in the middle of the robe, like the opening in a coat of mail, *with* a woven binding all around the opening, so that it would not tear. [24]They made on the hem of the robe pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, and of fine woven *linen.* [25]And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates on the hem of the robe all around between the pomegranates: [26]a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe to minister in, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[27]They made tunics, artistically woven of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, [28]a turban of fine linen, exquisite hats of fine linen, short trousers of fine woven linen, [29]and a sash of fine woven linen with blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* made by a weaver, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[30]Then they made the plate of the holy

39:1 [a]Or *woven garments*

Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

EXODUS 33:21, 22

Local tradition in Burrington Combe, England, holds that Reverend Augustus M. Toplady was inspired to write the famous hymn "Rock of Ages" when he physically experienced the shelter of his God. As he was traversing through the gorge in the Mendip Hills, a storm pounded the landscape. Toplady sought protection in a break in the rocks and jotted down the prayer, "Let me hide myself in Thee." That rock is now called "The Rock of Ages" and is a popular tourist attraction.

But the hymn may not have even been known had it not been included in an angry letter to John Wesley by Toplady that appeared in *The Gospel Magazine*. Toplady was a staunch Calvinist and John Wesley was a revered Arminian. Toplady boldly proclaimed that in the same way England could not pay her national debt, man could not by his own efforts pay his insurmountable debt to a just and holy God. "Rock of Ages" appeared at the end of his article, almost as if when finished Toplady burst into song. The irony of his including his poem is that John Wesley, himself, had written something strikingly similar years before, "O Rock of Salvation, Rock struck and cleft for me, let those two Streams of Blood and Water which gushed from thy side, bring down Pardon and Holiness into my soul."

The truth is, we can debate with one another about the way God works, but His ways are exactly that—His. He explained it to Moses, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Ex. 33:19). And then, in His grace, He showed Himself to Moses, and in His mercy, He placed him in the cleft of the rock to spare him—"for no man shall see Me, and live" (v. 20). Praise our all-knowing God, whose ways are beyond our comprehension, that He chose to show compassion by sending His Son, "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father"(Eph. 2:18)!

Rock of Ages

Augustus M. Toplady | 1776

1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the Water and the Blood,
From thy riven Side which flow'd,
Be of Sin the double Cure,
Cleanse me from its Guilt and Pow'r.

2. Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill thy Law's demands:
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for Sin could not atone:
Thou must save, and Thou alone!

3. Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy Cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for Dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly:
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!

4. Whilst I draw this fleeting breath–
When my eye-strings break in death–
When I soar through tracts unknown–
See Thee on thy Judgment-Throne–
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!

crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription *like* the engraving of a signet:

HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

31And they tied to it a blue cord, to fasten *it* above on the turban, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Work Completed

32Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished. And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. 33And they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; 34the covering of ram skins dyed red, the covering of badger skins, and the veil of the covering; 35the ark of the Testimony with its poles, and the mercy seat; 36the table, all its utensils, and the showbread; 37the pure *gold* lampstand with its lamps (the lamps set in order), all its utensils, and the oil for light; 38the gold altar, the anointing oil, and the sweet incense; the screen for the tabernacle door; 39the bronze altar, its grate of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the laver with its base; 40the hangings of the court, its pillars and its sockets, the screen for the court gate, its cords, and its pegs; all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; 41and the garments of ministry,[a] to minister in the holy *place:* the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister as priests.

42According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. 43Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses blessed them.

The Tabernacle Erected and Arranged

40 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 3You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and partition off the ark with the veil. 4You shall bring in the table and arrange the things that are to be set in order on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and light its lamps. 5You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. 6Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 7And you shall set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. 8You shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen at the court gate.

9"And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy. 10You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy. 11And you shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it.

12"Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. 13You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. 14And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. 15You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."

16Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

17And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was raised up. 18So Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and raised up its pillars. 19And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 20He took the Testimony and put *it* into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. 21And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22He put the table in the tabernacle

39:41 [a]Or *woven garments*

of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil; [23]and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. [24]He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; [25]and he lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. [26]He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil; [27]and he burned sweet incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. [28]He hung up the screen *at* the door of the tabernacle. [29]And he put the altar of burnt offering *before* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. [30]He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing; [31]and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet *with water* from it. [32]Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses. [33]And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

The Cloud and the Glory

[34]Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. [35]And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. [36]Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. [37]But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. [38]For the cloud of the LORD *was* above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

THE THIRD BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

Leviticus



The Burnt Offering

1 Now the LORD called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock.

3'If his offering *is* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. 4Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. 5He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that *is by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 6And he shall skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. 7The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in order on the fire. 8Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar; 9but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

10'If his offering *is* of the flocks—of the sheep or of the goats—as a burnt sacrifice, he shall bring a male without blemish. 11He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. 12And he shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat; and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar; 13but he shall wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priest shall bring *it* all and burn *it* on the altar; it *is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

14'And if the burnt sacrifice of his offering to the LORD *is* of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or young pigeons. 15The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off its head, and burn *it* on the altar; its blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar. 16And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar on the east side, into the place for ashes. 17Then he shall split it at its wings, *but* shall not divide *it* completely; and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that *is* on the fire. It *is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

The Grain Offering

2 'When anyone offers a grain offering to the LORD, his offering shall be *of* fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. 2He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn *it as* a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 3The rest of the grain offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons'. *It is* most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire.

4'And if you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in the oven, *it shall be* unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. 5But if your offering *is* a grain offering *baked* in a pan, *it shall be of* fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil. 6You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it *is* a grain offering.

7'If your offering *is* a grain offering *baked* in a covered pan, it shall be made

of fine flour with oil. 8You shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD. And when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. 9Then the priest shall take from the grain offering a memorial portion, and burn *it* on the altar. *It is* an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 10And what is left of the grain offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons'. *It is* most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire.

11"No grain offering which you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the LORD made by fire. 12As for the offering of the firstfruits, you shall offer them to the LORD, but they shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet aroma. 13And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.

14"If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads. 15And you shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it. It *is* a grain offering. 16Then the priest shall burn the memorial portion: *part* of its beaten grain and *part* of its oil, with all the frankincense, as an offering made by fire to the LORD.

The Peace Offering

3 "When his offering *is* a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers *it* of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. 2And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. 3Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the LORD. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails, 4the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 5and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which *is* on the wood that *is* on the fire, *as* an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

6"If his offering as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD is of the flock, *whether* male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. 7If he offers a lamb as his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD. 8And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar.

9"Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD, its fat *and* the whole fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone. And the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails, 10the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 11and the priest shall burn *them* on the altar *as* food, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

12"And if his offering *is* a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD. 13He shall lay his hand on its head and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. 14Then he shall offer from it his offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails, 15the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 16and the priest shall burn them on the altar *as* food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma; all the fat *is* the LORD's.

17"*This shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.'"

The Sin Offering

4 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and does any of them, 3if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he

has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. 4He shall bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, lay his hand on the bull's head, and kill the bull before the LORD. 5Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. 6The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. 7And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 8He shall take from it all the fat of the bull as the sin offering. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat which *is* on the entrails, 9the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove, 10as it was taken from the bull of the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn them on the altar of the burnt offering. 11But the bull's hide and all its flesh, with its head and legs, its entrails and offal— 12the whole bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

13'Now if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which should not be done, and are guilty; 14when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting. 15And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD. Then the bull shall be killed before the LORD. 16The anointed priest shall bring some of the bull's blood to the tabernacle of meeting. 17Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil. 18And he shall put *some* of the blood on the horns of the altar which *is* before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 19He shall take all the fat from it and burn *it* on the altar. 20And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. 21Then he shall carry the bull outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull. It *is* a sin offering for the assembly.

22'When a ruler has sinned, and done *something* unintentionally *against* any of the commandments of the LORD his God *in anything* which should not be done, and is guilty, 23or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. 24And he shall lay his hand on the head of the goat, and kill it at the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD. It *is* a sin offering. 25The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. 26And he shall burn all its fat on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of the peace offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

27'If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and is guilty, 28or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. 29And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. 30Then the priest shall take *some* of its blood with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all *the remaining* blood at the base of the altar. 31He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the

priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

32 'If he brings a lamb as his sin offering,
he shall bring a female without blemish.
33 Then he shall lay his hand on the head
of the sin offering, and kill it as a sin offering at the place where they kill the burnt
offering. 34 The priest shall take *some* of the
blood of the sin offering with his finger,
put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt
offering, and pour all *the remaining* blood
at the base of the altar. 35 He shall remove
all its fat, as the fat of the lamb is removed
from the sacrifice of the peace offering.
Then the priest shall burn it on the altar,
according to the offerings made by fire to
the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed,
and it shall be forgiven him.

The Trespass Offering

5 'If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and *is* a witness,
whether he has seen or known *of the matter*—if he does not tell *it,* he bears guilt.

2 'Or if a person touches any unclean
thing, whether *it is* the carcass of an
unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean
livestock, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and he is unaware of it, he
also shall be unclean and guilty. 3 Or if he
touches human uncleanness—whatever
uncleanness with which a man may be
defiled, and he is unaware of it—when he
realizes *it,* then he shall be guilty.

4 'Or if a person swears, speaking
thoughtlessly with *his* lips to do evil or to
do good, whatever *it is* that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of
it—when he realizes *it,* then he shall be
guilty in any of these *matters.*

5 'And it shall be, when he is guilty in any
of these *matters,* that he shall confess that
he has sinned in that *thing;* 6 and he shall
bring his trespass offering to the LORD for
his sin which he has committed, a female
from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats
as a sin offering. So the priest shall make
atonement for him concerning his sin.

7 'If he is not able to bring a lamb, then
he shall bring to the LORD, for his trespass
which he has committed, two turtledoves
or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering
and the other as a burnt offering. 8 And he
shall bring them to the priest, who shall
offer *that* which *is* for the sin offering first,
and wring off its head from its neck, but
shall not divide *it* completely. 9 Then he
shall sprinkle *some* of the blood of the sin
offering on the side of the altar, and the
rest of the blood shall be drained out at
the base of the altar. It *is* a sin offering.
10 And he shall offer the second *as* a burnt
offering according to the prescribed manner. So the priest shall make atonement on
his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

11 'But if he is not able to bring two
turtledoves or two young pigeons, then
he who sinned shall bring for his offering
one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a
sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor
shall he put frankincense on it, for it *is* a
sin offering. 12 Then he shall bring it to the
priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as a memorial portion, and burn
it on the altar according to the offerings
made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a sin offering.
13 The priest shall make atonement for him,
for his sin that he has committed in any
of these matters; and it shall be forgiven
him. *The rest* shall be the priest's as a grain
offering.'"

Offerings with Restitution

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 15 "If a person commits a trespass, and
sins unintentionally in regard to the holy
things of the LORD, then he shall bring
to the LORD as his trespass offering a ram
without blemish from the flocks, with your
valuation in shekels of silver according to
the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass
offering. 16 And he shall make restitution
for the harm that he has done in regard to
the holy thing, and shall add one-fifth to it
and give it to the priest. So the priest shall
make atonement for him with the ram of
the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.

17 "If a person sins, and commits any of
these things which are forbidden to be
done by the commandments of the LORD,
though he does not know *it,* yet he is guilty
and shall bear his iniquity. 18 And he shall
bring to the priest a ram without blemish

from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him regarding his ignorance in which he erred and did not know *it,* and it shall be forgiven him. [19]It is a trespass offering; he has certainly trespassed against the LORD."

6 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: [2]"If a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by lying to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, [3]or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely—in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: [4]then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, [5]or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, *and* give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering. [6]And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering, to the priest. [7]So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he shall be forgiven for any one of these things that he may have done in which he trespasses."

The Law of the Burnt Offering

[8]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [9]"Command Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This *is* the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering *shall be* on the hearth upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. [10]And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen trousers he shall put on his body, and take up the ashes of the burnt offering which the fire has consumed on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. [11]Then he shall take off his garments, put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. [12]And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order on it; and he shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. [13]A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.

The Law of the Grain Offering

[14]"This *is* the law of the grain offering: The sons of Aaron shall offer it on the altar before the LORD. [15]He shall take from it his handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil, and all the frankincense which *is* on the grain offering, and shall burn *it* on the altar *for* a sweet aroma, as a memorial to the LORD. [16]And the remainder of it Aaron and his sons shall eat; with unleavened bread it shall be eaten in a holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of meeting they shall eat it. [17]It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it *as* their portion of My offerings made by fire; it *is* most holy, like the sin offering and the trespass offering. [18]All the males among the children of Aaron may eat it. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations concerning the offerings made by fire to the LORD. Everyone who touches them must be holy.'"[a]

[19]And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [20]"This *is* the offering of Aaron and his sons, which they shall offer to the LORD, *beginning* on the day when he is anointed: one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a daily grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it at night. [21]It shall be made in a pan with oil. *When it is* mixed, you shall bring it in. The baked pieces of the grain offering you shall offer *for* a sweet aroma to the LORD. [22]The priest from among his sons, who is anointed in his place, shall offer it. *It is* a statute forever to the LORD. It shall be wholly burned. [23]For every grain offering for the priest shall be wholly burned. It shall not be eaten."

The Law of the Sin Offering

[24]Also the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [25]"Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This *is* the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed, the sin offering shall be killed before the LORD. It *is* most holy. [26]The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall

6:18 [a]Compare Numbers 4:15 and Haggai 2:11–13

be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of meeting. 27Everyone who touches its flesh must be holy.[a] And when its blood is sprinkled on any garment, you shall wash that on which it was sprinkled, in a holy place. 28But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken. And if it is boiled in a bronze pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water. 29All the males among the priests may eat it. It *is* most holy. 30But no sin offering from which *any* of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of meeting, to make atonement in the holy *place,*[a] shall be eaten. It shall be burned in the fire.

The Law of the Trespass Offering

7 'Likewise this is the law of the trespass offering (it *is* most holy): 2In the place where they kill the burnt offering they shall kill the trespass offering. And its blood he shall sprinkle all around on the altar. 3And he shall offer from it all its fat. The fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, 4the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 5and the priest shall burn them on the altar *as* an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a trespass offering. 6Every male among the priests may eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place. It *is* most holy. 7The trespass offering *is* like the sin offering; *there* is one law for them both: the priest who makes atonement with it shall have *it*. 8And the priest who offers anyone's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has offered. 9Also every grain offering that is baked in the oven and all that is prepared in the covered pan, or in a pan, shall be the priest's who offers it. 10Every grain offering, *whether* mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to one *as much* as the other.

The Law of Peace Offerings

11 'This *is* the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which he shall offer to the LORD: 12If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of blended flour mixed with oil. 13Besides the cakes, *as* his offering he shall offer leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering. 14And from it he shall offer one cake from each offering *as* a heave offering to the LORD. It shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offering.

15 'The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning. 16But if the sacrifice of his offering *is* a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it also may be eaten; 17the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire. 18And if *any* of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, nor shall it be imputed to him; it shall be an abomination to him who offers it, and the person who eats of it shall bear guilt.

19 'The flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned with fire. And as for the *clean* flesh, all who are clean may eat of it. 20But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that *belongs* to the LORD, while he is unclean, that person shall be cut off from his people. 21Moreover the person who touches any unclean thing, *such as* human uncleanness, *an* unclean animal, or

6:27 [a]Compare Numbers 4:15 and Haggai 2:11–13 **6:30** [a]The Most Holy Place when capitalized

any abominable unclean thing,[a] and who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that *belongs* to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people.'"

Fat and Blood May Not Be Eaten

22And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 23"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'You shall not eat any fat, of ox or sheep or goat. 24And the fat of an animal that dies *naturally,* and the fat of what is torn by wild beasts, may be used in any other way; but you shall by no means eat it. 25For whoever eats the fat of the animal of which men offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, the person who eats *it* shall be cut off from his people. 26Moreover you shall not eat any blood in any of your dwellings, *whether* of bird or beast. 27Whoever eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people.'"

The Portion of Aaron and His Sons

28Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 29"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offering to the LORD shall bring his offering to the LORD from the sacrifice of his peace offering. 30His own hands shall bring the offerings made by fire to the LORD. The fat with the breast he shall bring, that the breast may be waved *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 31And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. 32Also the right thigh you shall give to the priest *as* a heave offering from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. 33He among the sons of Aaron, who offers the blood of the peace offering and the fat, shall have the right thigh for *his* part. 34For the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering I have taken from the children of Israel, from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and I have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons from the children of Israel by a statute forever.'"

35This *is* the consecrated portion for Aaron and his sons, from the offerings made by fire to the LORD, on the day when Moses presented them to minister to the LORD as priests. 36The LORD commanded this to be given to them by the children of Israel, on the day that He anointed them, *by* a statute forever throughout their generations.

37This *is* the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the consecrations, and the sacrifice of the peace offering, 38which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, on the day when He commanded the children of Israel to offer their offerings to the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai.

Aaron and His Sons Consecrated

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, the anointing oil, a bull as the sin offering, two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; 3and gather all the congregation together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting."

4So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. And the congregation was gathered together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 5And Moses said to the congregation, "This *is* what the LORD commanded to be done."

6Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. 7And he put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the intricately woven band of the ephod, and with it tied *the ephod* on him. 8Then he put the breastplate on him, and he put the Urim and the Thummim[a] in the breastplate. 9And he put the turban on his head. Also on the turban, on its front, he put the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

10Also Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that *was* in it, and consecrated them. 11He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to consecrate them. 12And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him.

13Then Moses brought Aaron's sons and put tunics on them, girded them with sashes, and put hats on them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

7:21 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, and Targum read *swarming thing* (compare 5:2).
8:8 [a]Literally *the Lights and the Perfections* (compare Exodus 28:30)

14And he brought the bull for the sin offering. Then Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull for the sin offering, 15and Moses killed *it*. Then he took the blood, and put *some* on the horns of the altar all around with his finger, and purified the altar. And he poured the blood at the base of the altar, and consecrated it, to make atonement for it. 16Then he took all the fat that *was* on the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, and the two kidneys with their fat, and Moses burned *them* on the altar. 17But the bull, its hide, its flesh, and its offal, he burned with fire outside the camp, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

18Then he brought the ram as the burnt offering. And Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram, 19and Moses killed *it*. Then he sprinkled the blood all around on the altar. 20And he cut the ram into pieces; and Moses burned the head, the pieces, and the fat. 21Then he washed the entrails and the legs in water. And Moses burned the whole ram on the altar. It *was* a burnt sacrifice for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22And he brought the second ram, the ram of consecration. Then Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram, 23and Moses killed *it*. Also he took *some* of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 24Then he brought Aaron's sons. And Moses put *some* of the blood on the tips of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses sprinkled the blood all around on the altar. 25Then he took the fat and the fat tail, all the fat that *was* on the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh; 26and from the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD he took one unleavened cake, a cake of bread *anointed with oil,* and one wafer, and put *them* on the fat and on the right thigh; 27and he put all *these* in Aaron's hands and in his sons' hands, and waved them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 28Then Moses took them from their hands and burned *them* on the altar, on the burnt offering. They *were* consecration offerings for a sweet aroma. That *was* an offering made by fire to the LORD. 29And Moses took the breast and waved it *as* a wave offering before the LORD. It was Moses' part of the ram of consecration, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half-dead, or half-asleep; but lift up your voice with strength.

JOHN WESLEY

30Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which *was* on the altar, and sprinkled *it* on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.

31And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the flesh *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and eat it there with the bread that *is* in the basket of consecration offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.' 32What remains of the flesh and of the bread you shall burn with fire. 33And you shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of meeting *for* seven days, until the days of your consecration are ended. For seven days he shall consecrate you. 34As he has done this day, *so* the LORD has commanded to do, to make atonement for you. 35Therefore you shall stay *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting day and night for seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, so that you may not die; for so I have been commanded." 36So Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses.

The Priestly Ministry Begins

9 It came to pass on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. 2And he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer *them* before the LORD. 3And to the children of Israel you shall speak, saying, 'Take a kid of the goats

as a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, *both* of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering, 4also a bull and a ram as peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today the LORD will appear to you.'"

5So they brought what Moses commanded before the tabernacle of meeting. And all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. 6Then Moses said, "This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded you to do, and the glory of the LORD will appear to you." 7And Moses said to Aaron, "Go to the altar, offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people. Offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, as the LORD commanded."

8Aaron therefore went to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which *was* for himself. 9Then the sons of Aaron brought the blood to him. And he dipped his finger in the blood, put *it* on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the base of the altar. 10But the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe from the liver of the sin offering he burned on the altar, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 11The flesh and the hide he burned with fire outside the camp.

12And he killed the burnt offering; and Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled all around on the altar. 13Then they presented the burnt offering to him, with its pieces and head, and he burned *them* on the altar. 14And he washed the entrails and the legs, and burned *them* with the burnt offering on the altar.

15Then he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which *was* the sin offering for the people, and killed it and offered it for sin, like the first one. 16And he brought the burnt offering and offered it according to the prescribed manner. 17Then he brought the grain offering, took a handful of it, and burned *it* on the altar, besides the burnt sacrifice of the morning.

18He also killed the bull and the ram *as* sacrifices of peace offerings, which *were* for the people. And Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled all around on the altar, 19and the fat from the bull and the ram—the fatty tail, what covers *the entrails* and the kidneys, and the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver; 20and they put the fat on the breasts. Then he burned the fat on the altar; 21but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved *as* a wave offering before the LORD, as Moses had commanded.

22Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. 23And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, 24and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw *it,* they shouted and fell on their faces.

The Profane Fire of Nadab and Abihu

10 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. 3And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying:

'By those who come near Me
I must be regarded as holy;
And before all the people
I must be glorified.'"

So Aaron held his peace.

4Then Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp." 5So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moses had said.

6And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, "Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD has kindled. 7You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of

meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the LORD *is* upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses.

Conduct Prescribed for Priests

[8]Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: [9]"Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. *It shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations, [10]that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, [11]and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."

[12]And Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons who were left: "Take the grain offering that remains of the offerings made by fire to the LORD, and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it *is* most holy. [13]You shall eat it in a holy place, because it *is* your due and your sons' due, of the sacrifices made by fire to the LORD; for so I have been commanded. [14]The breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering you shall eat in a clean place, you, your sons, and your daughters with you; for *they are* your due and your sons' due, *which* are given from the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel. [15]The thigh of the heave offering and the breast of the wave offering they shall bring with the offerings of fat made by fire, to offer *as* a wave offering before the LORD. And it shall be yours and your sons' with you, by a statute forever, as the LORD has commanded."

[16]Then Moses made careful inquiry about the goat of the sin offering, and there it was—burned up. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron *who were* left, saying, [17]"Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a holy place, since it *is* most holy, and *God* has given it to you to bear the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? [18]See! Its blood was not brought inside the holy *place;*[a] indeed you should have eaten it in a holy *place,* as I commanded."

[19]And Aaron said to Moses, "Look, this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and such things have befallen me! *If* I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?" [20]So when Moses heard *that,* he was content.

Foods Permitted and Forbidden

11 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, [2]"Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'These *are* the animals which you may eat among all the animals that *are* on the earth: [3]Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves *and* chewing the cud—that you may eat. [4]Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; [5]the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you; [6]the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you; [7]and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, *is* unclean to you. [8]Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They *are* unclean to you.

[9]'These you may eat of all that *are* in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat. [10]But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which *is* in the water, they *are* an abomination to you. [11]They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. [12]Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales—that *shall be* an abomination to you.

[13]'And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they *are* an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, [14]the kite, and the falcon after its kind; [15]every raven after its kind, [16]the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; [17]the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; [18]the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; [19]the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

10:18 [a]The Most Holy Place when capitalized

20 'All flying insects that creep on *all* fours *shall be* an abomination to you. 21 Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on *all* fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. 22 These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. 23 But all *other* flying insects which have four feet *shall be* an abomination to you.

Unclean Animals

24 'By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; 25 whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening: 26 *The carcass* of any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, *is* unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean. 27 And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on *all* fours, those *are* unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. 28 Whoever carries *any such* carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It *is* unclean to you.

29 'These also *shall be* unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; 30 the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. 31 These *are* unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening. 32 Anything on which *any* of them falls, when they are dead shall be unclean, whether *it is* any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item *it is*, in which *any* work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean. 33 Any earthen vessel into which *any* of them falls you shall break; and whatever *is* in it shall be unclean: 34 in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean. 35 And everything on which *a part of any such* carcass falls shall be unclean; *whether it is* an oven or cooking stove, it shall be broken down; *for* they *are* unclean, and shall be unclean to you. 36 Nevertheless a spring or a cistern, *in which there is* plenty of water, shall be clean, but whatever touches any such carcass becomes unclean. 37 And if a part of *any such* carcass falls on any planting seed which is to be sown, it *remains* clean. 38 But if water is put on the seed, and if *a part* of *any such* carcass falls on it, it *becomes* unclean to you.

39 'And if any animal which you may eat dies, he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until evening. 40 He who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. He also who carries its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

41 'And every creeping thing that creeps on the earth *shall be* an abomination. It shall not be eaten. 42 Whatever crawls on its belly, whatever goes on *all* fours, or whatever has many feet among all creeping things that creep on the earth—these you shall not eat, for they *are* an abomination. 43 You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. 44 For I *am* the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I *am* holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 45 For I *am* the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

46 'This *is* the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, 47 to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.'"

The Ritual After Childbirth

12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. 3 And on the eighth day the flesh of his

foreskin shall be circumcised. 4She shall then continue in the blood of *her* purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

5'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of *her* purification sixty-six days.

6'When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 7Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This *is* the law for her who has borne a male or a female.

8'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

The Law Concerning Leprosy

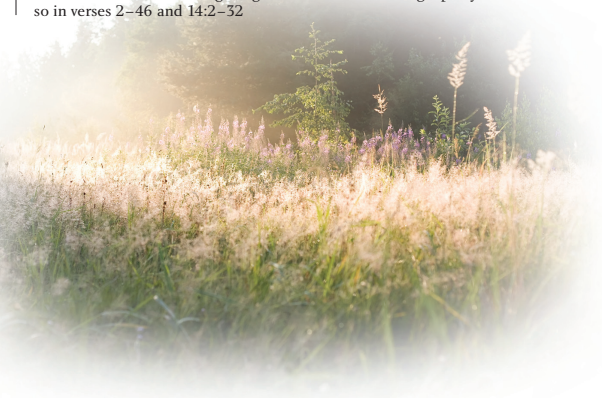
13 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2"When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body *like* a leprous[a] sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. 3The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears *to be* deeper than the skin of his body, it *is* a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean. 4But if the bright spot *is* white on the skin of his body, and does not appear *to be* deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the sore seven days. 5And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore appears to be as it was, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him another seven days. 6Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore has faded, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it *is only* a scab, and he shall wash his clothes and be clean. 7But if the scab should at all spread over the skin, after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again. 8And *if* the priest sees that the scab has indeed spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* leprosy.

9"When the leprous sore is on a person, then he shall be brought to the priest. 10And the priest shall examine *him*; and indeed *if* the swelling on the skin *is* white, and it has turned the hair white, and *there* is a spot of raw flesh in the swelling, 11it *is* an old leprosy on the skin of his body. The priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not isolate him, for he *is* unclean.

12"And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of *the one who has* the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, 13then the priest shall consider; and indeed *if* the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce *him* clean *who has* the sore. It has all turned white. He *is* clean. 14But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. 15And the priest shall examine the raw flesh and pronounce him to be unclean; *for* the raw flesh *is* unclean. It *is* leprosy. 16Or if the raw flesh changes and turns white again, he shall come to the priest. 17And the priest shall examine him; and indeed *if* the sore has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce *him* clean *who has* the sore. He *is* clean.

18"If the body develops a boil in the skin, and it is healed, 19and in the place of the boil there comes a white swelling or

13:2 [a]Hebrew *saraath*, disfiguring skin diseases, including leprosy, and so in verses 2–46 and 14:2–32



a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest; [20]and *if,* when the priest sees it, it indeed appears deeper than the skin, and its hair has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore which has broken out of the boil. [21]But if the priest examines it, and indeed *there are* no white hairs in it, and it *is* not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days; [22]and if it should at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore. [23]But if the bright spot stays in one place, *and* has not spread, it *is* the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

[24]"Or if the body receives a burn on its skin by fire, and the raw *flesh* of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white or white, [25]then the priest shall examine it; and indeed *if* the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it *is* leprosy broken out in the burn. Therefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore. [26]But if the priest examines it, and indeed *there are* no white hairs in the bright spot, and it *is* not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days. [27]And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore. [28]But if the bright spot stays in one place, *and* has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it *is* a swelling from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean, for it *is* the scar from the burn.

[29]"If a man or woman has a sore on the head or the beard, [30]then the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if it appears deeper than the skin, *and there is* in it thin yellow hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a scaly leprosy of the head or beard. [31]But if the priest examines the scaly sore, and indeed it does not appear deeper than the skin, and *there is* no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the scale seven days. [32]And on the seventh day the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed *if* the scale has not spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the scale does not appear deeper than the skin, [33]he shall shave himself, but the scale he shall not shave. And the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the scale another seven days. [34]On the seventh day the priest shall examine the scale; and indeed *if* the scale has not spread over the skin, and does not appear deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes and be clean. [35]But if the scale should at all spread over the skin after his cleansing, [36]then the priest shall examine him; and indeed *if* the scale has spread over the skin, the priest need not seek for yellow hair. He *is* unclean. [37]But if the scale appears to be at a standstill, and there is black hair grown up in it, the scale has healed. He *is* clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

[38]"If a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, *specifically* white bright spots, [39]then the priest shall look; and indeed *if* the bright spots on the skin of the body *are* dull white, it *is* a white spot *that* grows on the skin. He *is* clean.

[40]"As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he *is* bald, but he *is* clean. [41]He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he *is* bald on the forehead, *but* he *is* clean. [42]And if there is on the bald head or bald forehead a reddish-white sore, it *is* leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead. [43]Then the priest shall examine it; and indeed *if* the swelling of the sore *is* reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, as the appearance of leprosy on the skin of the body, [44]he is a leprous man. He *is* unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his sore *is* on his head.

[45]"Now the leper on whom the sore *is,* his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' [46]He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He *is* unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling *shall be* outside the camp.

The Law Concerning Leprous Garments

[47]"Also, if a garment has a leprous plague[a] in it, *whether it is* a woolen garment or a linen garment, [48]whether *it is* in the

13:47 [a]A mold, fungus, or similar infestation, and so in verses 47–59

warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather, 49and if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it *is* a leprous plague and shall be shown to the priest. 50The priest shall examine the plague and isolate *that which has* the plague seven days. 51And he shall examine the plague on the seventh day. If the plague has spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, in the leather *or* in anything made of leather, the plague *is* an active leprosy. It *is* unclean. 52He shall therefore burn that garment in which is the plague, whether warp or woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of leather, for it *is* an active leprosy; *the garment* shall be burned in the fire.

53"But if the priest examines *it,* and indeed the plague has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, 54then the priest shall command that they wash *the thing* in which *is* the plague; and he shall isolate it another seven days. 55Then the priest shall examine the plague after it has been washed; and indeed *if* the plague has not changed its color, though the plague has not spread, it *is* unclean, and you shall burn it in the fire; it continues eating away, *whether* the damage *is* outside or inside. 56If the priest examines *it,* and indeed the plague has faded after washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, whether out of the warp or out of the woof, or out of the leather. 57But if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it *is* a spreading *plague*; you shall burn with fire that in which is the plague. 58And if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or whatever is made of leather, if the plague has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean.

59"This *is* the law of the leprous plague in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or in anything made of leather, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean."

The Ritual for Cleansing Healed Lepers

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. 3And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine *him*; and indeed, *if* the leprosy is healed in the leper, 4then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living *and* clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. 5And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. 6As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird *that was* killed over the running water. 7And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field. 8He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days. 9But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows—all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean.

10"And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe



lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil. 11Then the priest who makes *him* clean shall present the man who is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 12And the priest shall take one male lamb and offer it as a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 13Then he shall kill the lamb in the place where he kills the sin offering and the burnt offering, in a holy place; for as the sin offering *is* the priest's, so *is* the trespass offering. It *is* most holy. 14The priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put *it* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 15And the priest shall take *some* of the log of oil, and pour *it* into the palm of his own left hand. 16Then the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD. 17And of the rest of the oil in his hand, the priest shall put *some* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering. 18The rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD.

19"Then the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. 20And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

21"But if he *is* poor and cannot afford it, then he shall take one male lamb as a trespass offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, a log of oil, 22and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford: one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering. 23He shall bring them to the priest on the eighth day for his cleansing, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, before the LORD. 24And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 25Then he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, and the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering and put *it* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 26And the priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand. 27Then the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger *some* of the oil that *is* in his left hand seven times before the LORD. 28And the priest shall put *some* of the oil that *is* in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the trespass offering. 29The rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD. 30And he shall offer one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, such as he can afford— 31such as he is able to afford, the one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a burnt offering, with the grain offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him who is to be cleansed before the LORD. 32This *is* the law *for one* who had a leprous sore, who cannot afford the usual cleansing."

The Law Concerning Leprous Houses

33And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 34"When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous plague[a] in a house in the land of your possession, 35and he who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, 'It seems to me that *there is* some plague in the house,' 36then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes *into it* to examine the plague, that all that *is* in the house may not be made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to examine the house. 37And he shall examine the

14:34 [a]Decomposition by mildew, mold, dry rot, etc., and so in verses 34–53

plague; and indeed *if* the plague *is* on the walls of the house with ingrained streaks, greenish or reddish, which appear to be deep in the wall, 38then the priest shall go out of the house, to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days. 39And the priest shall come again on the seventh day and look; and indeed *if* the plague has spread on the walls of the house, 40then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which *is* the plague, and they shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city. 41And he shall cause the house to be scraped inside, all around, and the dust that they scrape off they shall pour out in an unclean place outside the city. 42Then they shall take other stones and put *them* in the place of *those* stones, and he shall take other mortar and plaster the house.

43"Now if the plague comes back and breaks out in the house, after he has taken away the stones, after he has scraped the house, and after it is plastered, 44then the priest shall come and look; and indeed *if* the plague has spread in the house, it *is* an active leprosy in the house. It *is* unclean. 45And he shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall carry *them* outside the city to an unclean place. 46Moreover he who goes into the house at all while it is shut up shall be unclean until evening. 47And he who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes, and he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes.

48"But if the priest comes in and examines *it,* and indeed the plague has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed. 49And he shall take, to cleanse the house, two birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. 50Then he shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water; 51and he shall take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and the running water and the living bird, with the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet. 53Then he shall let the living bird loose outside the city in the open field, and make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean.

54"This *is* the law for any leprous sore and scale, 55for the leprosy of a garment and of a house, 56for a swelling and a scab and a bright spot, 57to teach when *it is* unclean and when *it is* clean. This *is* the law of leprosy."

The Law Concerning Bodily Discharges

15 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge *is* unclean. 3And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge—whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it *is* his uncleanness. 4Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. 5And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 6He who sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 7And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 8If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 9Any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean. 10Whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until evening. He who carries *any of* those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 11And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 12The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.

13'And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body

in running water; then he shall be clean.
14On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest. 15Then the priest shall offer them, the one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD because of his discharge.

16'If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. 17And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. 18Also, when a woman lies with a man, and *there is* an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

19'If a woman has a discharge, *and* the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. 20Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. 21Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 22And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 23If *anything* is on *her* bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. 24And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

25'If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her *customary* impurity, or if it runs beyond her *usual time of impurity,* all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her *customary* impurity. She *shall* be unclean. 26Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. 27Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

28'But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. 29And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 30Then the priest shall offer the one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for the discharge of her uncleanness.

31'Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that *is* among them. 32This *is* the law for one who has a discharge, and *for him* who emits semen and is unclean thereby, 33and for her who is indisposed because of her *customary* impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean.'"

The Day of Atonement

16 Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered *profane fire* before the LORD, and died; 2and the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at *just* any time into the Holy *Place* inside the veil, before the mercy seat which *is* on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.

3"Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy *Place*: with *the blood of* a young bull as a sin offering, and *of* a ram as a burnt offering. 4He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These *are* holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on. 5And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.

6"Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which *is* for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. 7He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 8Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9And Aaron shall bring the goat on which

the LORD's lot fell, and offer it *as* a sin offering. 10But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, *and* to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

11"And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which *is* for himself. 12Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring *it* inside the veil. 13And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* on the Testimony, lest he die. 14He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle *it* with his finger on the mercy seat on the east *side*; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

15"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which *is* for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. 16So he shall make atonement for the Holy *Place,* because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy *Place,* until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel. 18And he shall go out to the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. 19Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

20"And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy *Place,* the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. 21Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. 22The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

23"Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy *Place,* and shall leave them there. 24And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people. 25The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. 26And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. 27The bull *for* the sin offering and the goat *for* the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy *Place,* shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal. 28Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.

29"*This* shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether* a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. 30For on that day *the priest* shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31It *is* a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. *It is* a statute forever. 32And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; 33then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary,[a] and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. 34This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make

16:33 [a]That is, the Most Holy Place

atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year." And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Sanctity of Blood

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, 'This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying: 3"Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills *it* outside the camp, 4and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people, 5to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them *as* peace offerings to the LORD. 6And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 7They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations." '

8"Also you shall say to them: 'Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, 9and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from among his people.

10'And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.' 12Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.'

13"Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; 14for *it is* the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.'

15"And every person who eats what died *naturally* or what was torn *by beasts, whether he is* a native of your own country or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean. 16But if he does not wash *them* or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."

Laws of Sexual Morality

18 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. 3According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. 4You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I *am* the LORD your God. 5You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.

6'None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I *am* the LORD. 7The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She *is* your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. 8The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it *is* your father's nakedness. 9The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, *whether* born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover. 10The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs *is* your own nakedness. 11The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father—she *is* your sister—you shall not uncover her nakedness. 12You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sis-

ter; she *is* near of kin to your father. 13You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she *is* near of kin to your mother. 14You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother. You shall not approach his wife; she *is* your aunt. 15You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law—she *is* your son's wife—you shall not uncover her nakedness. 16You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it *is* your brother's nakedness. 17You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They *are* near of kin to her. It *is* wickedness. 18Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.

19'Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her *customary* impurity. 20Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her. 21And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through *the fire* to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD. 22You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It *is* an abomination. 23Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It *is* perversion.

24'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. 25For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. 26You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations, *either* any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27(for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who *were* before you, and thus the land is defiled), 28lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that *were* before you. 29For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit *them* shall be cut off from among their people.

30'Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that *you* do not commit *any* of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I *am* the LORD your God.'"

Moral and Ceremonial Laws

19 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy.

3'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I *am* the LORD your God.

4'Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I *am* the LORD your God.

5'And if you offer a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, you shall offer it of your own free will. 6It shall be eaten the same day you offer *it*, and on the next day. And if any remains until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire. 7And if it is eaten at all on the third day, it *is* an abomination. It shall not be accepted. 8Therefore *everyone* who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the hallowed *offering of* the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from his people.

9'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather *every* grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

11'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. 12And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD.

13'You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning. 14You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I *am* the LORD.

15'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

16 You shall not go about *as* a talebearer
among your people; nor shall you take a
stand against the life of your neighbor: I
am the LORD.
17 'You shall not hate your brother in
your heart. You shall surely rebuke your
neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.
18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear
any grudge against the children of your
people, but you shall love your neighbor
as yourself: I *am* the LORD.
19 'You shall keep My statutes. You shall
not let your livestock breed with another
kind. You shall not sow your field with
mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed
linen and wool come upon you.
20 'Whoever lies carnally with a woman
who *is* betrothed to a man as a concubine,
and who has not at all been redeemed nor
given her freedom, for this there shall be
scourging; *but* they shall not be put to
death, because she was not free. 21 And
he shall bring his trespass offering to the
LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of
meeting, a ram as a trespass offering. 22 The
priest shall make atonement for him with
the ram of the trespass offering before the
LORD for his sin which he has committed.
And the sin which he has committed shall
be forgiven him.
23 'When you come into the land, and
have planted all kinds of trees for food,
then you shall count their fruit as uncir-
cumcised. Three years it shall be as
uncircumcised to you. *It* shall not be eaten.
24 But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be
holy, a praise to the LORD. 25 And in the fifth
year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield
to you its increase: I *am* the LORD your God.
26 'You shall not eat *anything* with the
blood, nor shall you practice divination or
soothsaying. 27 You shall not shave around
the sides of your head, nor shall you dis-
figure the edges of your beard. 28 You shall
not make any cuttings in your flesh for the
dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I *am* the
LORD.
29 'Do not prostitute your daughter, to
cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall
into harlotry, and the land become full of
wickedness.
30 'You shall keep My Sabbaths and rev-
erence My sanctuary: I *am* the LORD.
31 'Give no regard to mediums and famil-
iar spirits; do not seek after them, to be
defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.
32 'You shall rise before the gray headed
and honor the presence of an old man, and
fear your God: I *am* the LORD.
33 'And if a stranger dwells with you in
your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34 The
stranger who dwells among you shall be to
you as one born among you, and you shall
love him as yourself; for you were strangers
in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.
35 'You shall do no injustice in judg-
ment, in measurement of length, weight,
or volume. 36 You shall have honest scales,
honest weights, an honest ephah, and an
honest hin: I *am* the LORD your God, who
brought you out of the land of Egypt.
37 'Therefore you shall observe all My
statutes and all My judgments, and per-
form them: I *am* the LORD.'"

Penalties for Breaking the Law

20 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, say-
ing, 2 "Again, you shall say to the
children of Israel: 'Whoever of the children
of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in
Israel, who gives *any* of his descendants to
Molech, he shall surely be put to death.
The people of the land shall stone him
with stones. 3 I will set My face against that
man, and will cut him off from his people,
because he has given *some* of his descen-
dants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary
and profane My holy name. 4 And if the
people of the land should in any way hide
their eyes from the man, when he gives
some of his descendants to Molech, and
they do not kill him, 5 then I will set My
face against that man and against his fam-
ily; and I will cut him off from his people,
and all who prostitute themselves with him
to commit harlotry with Molech.
6 'And the person who turns to mediums
and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself
with them, I will set My face against that
person and cut him off from his people.
7 Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be
holy, for I *am* the LORD your God. 8 And you
shall keep My statutes, and perform them:
I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you.
9 'For everyone who curses his father or
his mother shall surely be put to death. He

has cursed his father or his mother. His blood *shall be* upon him.

10 'The man who commits adultery with *another* man's wife, *he* who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. 11 The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them. 12 If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have committed perversion. Their blood *shall be* upon them. 13 If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them. 14 If a man marries a woman and her mother, it *is* wickedness. They shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you. 15 If a man mates with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. 16 If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *is* upon them.

17 'If a man takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it *is* a wicked thing. And they shall be cut off in the sight of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness. He shall bear his guilt. 18 If a man lies with a woman during her sickness and uncovers her nakedness, he has exposed her flow, and she has uncovered the flow of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from their people.

19 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister nor of your father's sister, for that would uncover his near of kin. They shall bear their guilt. 20 If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness. They shall bear their sin; they shall die childless. 21 If a man takes his brother's wife, it *is* an unclean thing. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They shall be childless.

22 'You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. 23 And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. 24 But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I *am* the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. 25 You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. 26 And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD *am* holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

27 'A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood *shall be* upon them.'"

Regulations for Conduct of Priests

21 And the LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'None shall defile himself for the dead among his people, 2 except for his relatives who are nearest to him: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother; 3 also his virgin sister who is near to him, who has had no husband, for her he may defile himself. 4 *Otherwise* he shall not defile himself, *being* a chief man among his people, to profane himself.

5 'They shall not make any bald *place* on their heads, nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh. 6 They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and* the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy. 7 They shall not take a wife *who is* a harlot or a defiled woman, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for *the priest*[a] is holy to his God. 8 Therefore you shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I the LORD, who sanctify you, *am* holy. 9 The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire.

21:7 [a]Literally *he*

10 'He *who* is the high priest among his
brethren, on whose head the anointing oil
was poured and who is consecrated to wear
the garments, shall not uncover his head
nor tear his clothes; 11 nor shall he go near
any dead body, nor defile himself for his
father or his mother; 12 nor shall he go out
of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctu-
ary of his God; for the consecration of the
anointing oil of his God *is* upon him: I *am*
the LORD. 13 And he shall take a wife in her
virginity. 14 A widow or a divorced woman
or a defiled woman *or* a harlot—these he
shall not marry; but he shall take a virgin
of his own people as wife. 15 Nor shall he
profane his posterity among his people, for
I the LORD sanctify him.'"

16 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
17 "Speak to Aaron, saying: 'No man of your
descendants in *succeeding* generations,
who has *any* defect, may approach to offer
the bread of his God. 18 For any man who
has a defect shall not approach: a man
blind or lame, who has a marred *face* or any
limb too long, 19 a man who has a broken
foot or broken hand, 20 or is a hunchback
or a dwarf, or a *man* who has a defect in
his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch.
21 No man of the descendants of Aaron the
priest, who has a defect, shall come near to
offer the offerings made by fire to the LORD.
He has a defect; he shall not come near to
offer the bread of his God. 22 He may eat
the bread of his God, *both* the most holy
and the holy; 23 only he shall not go near
the veil or approach the altar, because he
has a defect, lest he profane My sanctuar-
ies; for I the LORD sanctify them.'"

24 And Moses told *it* to Aaron and his
sons, and to all the children of Israel.

22 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, say-
ing, 2 "Speak to Aaron and his sons,
that they separate themselves from the
holy things of the children of Israel, and
that they do not profane My holy name *by*
what they dedicate to Me: I *am* the LORD.
3 Say to them: 'Whoever of all your descen-
dants throughout your generations, who
goes near the holy things which the chil-
dren of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while
he has uncleanness upon him, that person
shall be cut off from My presence: I *am* the
LORD.

4 'Whatever man of the descendants of
Aaron, who *is* a leper or has a discharge,
shall not eat the holy offerings until he is
clean. And whoever touches anything made
unclean *by* a corpse, or a man who has had an
emission of semen, 5 or whoever touches any
creeping thing by which he would be made
unclean, or any person by whom he would
become unclean, whatever his uncleanness
may be— 6 the person who has touched any
such thing shall be unclean until evening,
and shall not eat the holy *offerings* unless he
washes his body with water. 7 And when the
sun goes down he shall be clean; and after-
ward he may eat the holy *offerings,* because
it *is* his food. 8 Whatever dies *naturally* or is
torn by *beasts* he shall not eat, to defile him-
self with it: I *am* the LORD.

9 'They shall therefore keep My ordi-
nance, lest they bear sin for it and die
thereby, if they profane it: I the LORD sanc-
tify them.

10 'No outsider shall eat the holy *offering*;
one who dwells with the priest, or a hired
servant, shall not eat the holy thing. 11 But
if the priest buys a person with his money,
he may eat it; and one who is born in his
house may eat his food. 12 If the priest's
daughter is married to an outsider, she may
not eat of the holy offerings. 13 But if the
priest's daughter is a widow or divorced,
and has no child, and has returned to her
father's house as in her youth, she may eat
her father's food; but no outsider shall eat
it.

14 'And if a man eats the holy *offering*
unintentionally, then he shall restore a holy
offering to the priest, and add one-fifth to it.
15 They shall not profane the holy *offerings*
of the children of Israel, which they offer to
the LORD, 16 or allow them to bear the guilt of
trespass when they eat their holy *offerings*;
for I the LORD sanctify them.'"

Offerings Accepted and Not Accepted

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
18 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all
the children of Israel, and say to them:
'Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of
the strangers in Israel, who offers his sac-
rifice for any of his vows or for any of his
freewill offerings, which they offer to the
LORD as a burnt offering— 19 *you shall offer*

of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats. 20Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. 21And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill *his* vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. 22Those *that are* blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD. 23Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer *as* a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

24"You shall not offer to the LORD what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make *any offering of them* in your land. 25Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as the bread of your God, because their corruption *is* in them, *and* defects *are* in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf.'"

26And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 27"When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted as an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28*Whether it is* a cow or ewe, do not kill both her and her young on the same day. 29And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer *it* of your own free will. 30On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave none of it until morning: I *am* the LORD.

31"Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I *am* the LORD. 32You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you, 33who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD."

Feasts of the LORD

23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, these *are* My feasts.

The Sabbath

3'Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it*; it *is* the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

The Passover and Unleavened Bread

4'These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. 5On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the LORD's Passover. 6And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. 7On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. 8But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it*.'"

The Feast of Firstfruits

9And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be



accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. 13Its grain offering *shall be* two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering *shall be* of wine, one-fourth of a hin. 14You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The Feast of Weeks

15'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. 16Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. 17You shall bring from your dwellings two wave *loaves* of two-tenths *of an ephah*. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. *They are* the firstfruits to the LORD. 18And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be *as* a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 19Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. 20The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits *as* a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. 21And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work *on it. It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

22'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.'"

The Feast of Trumpets

23Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a sabbath-*rest,* a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25You shall do no customary work *on it;* and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.'"

The Day of Atonement

26And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 27"Also the tenth *day* of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28And you shall do no work on that same day, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. 29For any person who is not afflicted *in soul* on that same day shall be cut off from his people. 30And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32It *shall be* to you a sabbath of *solemn* rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth *day* of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

The Feast of Tabernacles

33Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles *for* seven days to the LORD. 35On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it.* 36*For* seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a sacred assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it.*

37 'These *are* the feasts of the LORD which
you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations,
to offer an offering made by fire to the
LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering,
a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything
on its day— 38 besides the Sabbaths of the
LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your
vows, and besides all your freewill offer-
ings which you give to the LORD.
39 'Also on the fifteenth day of the sev-
enth month, when you have gathered in
the fruit of the land, you shall keep the
feast of the LORD *for* seven days; on the
first day *there shall be* a sabbath-*rest,* and
on the eighth day a sabbath-*rest*. 40 And
you shall take for yourselves on the first
day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches
of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees,
and willows of the brook; and you shall
rejoice before the LORD your God for
seven days. 41 You shall keep it as a feast
to the LORD for seven days in the year. *It
shall be* a statute forever in your genera-
tions. You shall celebrate it in the seventh
month. 42 You shall dwell in booths for
seven days. All who are native Israelites
shall dwell in booths, 43 that your genera-
tions may know that I made the children
of Israel dwell in booths when I brought
them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the
LORD your God.'"
44 So Moses declared to the children of
Israel the feasts of the LORD.

Care of the Tabernacle Lamps

24 Then the LORD spoke to Moses,
saying: 2 "Command the children
of Israel that they bring to you pure oil
of pressed olives for the light, to make
the lamps burn continually. 3 Outside the
veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle
of meeting, Aaron shall be in charge of
it from evening until morning before the
LORD continually; *it shall be* a statute for-
ever in your generations. 4 He shall be in
charge of the lamps on the pure *gold* lamp-
stand before the LORD continually.

The Bread of the Tabernacle

5 "And you shall take fine flour and bake
twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths *of an ephah*
shall be in each cake. 6 You shall set them in
two rows, six in a row, on the pure *gold* table
before the LORD. 7 And you shall put pure
frankincense on *each* row, that it may be on
the bread for a memorial, an offering made
by fire to the LORD. 8 Every Sabbath he shall
set it in order before the LORD continually,
being taken from the children of Israel by an
everlasting covenant. 9 And it shall be for
Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in
a holy place; for it *is* most holy to him from
the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a
perpetual statute."

The Penalty for Blasphemy

10 Now the son of an Israelite woman,
whose father *was* an Egyptian, went out
among the children of Israel; and this
Israelite *woman's* son and a man of Israel
fought each other in the camp. 11 And the
Israelite woman's son blasphemed the
name *of the LORD* and cursed; and so they
brought him to Moses. (His mother's name
was Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the
tribe of Dan.) 12 Then they put him in cus-
tody, that the mind of the LORD might be
shown to them.
13 And the LORD spoke to Moses, say-
ing, 14 "Take outside the camp him who has
cursed; then let all who heard *him* lay their
hands on his head, and let all the congre-
gation stone him.
15 "Then you shall speak to the children
of Israel, saying: 'Whoever curses his God
shall bear his sin. 16 And whoever blas-
phemes the name of the LORD shall surely
be put to death. All the congregation shall
certainly stone him, the stranger as well
as him who is born in the land. When he
blasphemes the name *of the Lord,* he shall
be put to death.
17 'Whoever kills any man shall surely
be put to death. 18 Whoever kills an animal
shall make it good, animal for animal.
19 'If a man causes disfigurement of his
neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be
done to him— 20 fracture for fracture, eye
for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused
disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done
to him. 21 And whoever kills an animal shall
restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be
put to death. 22 You shall have the same law
for the stranger and for one from your own
country; for I *am* the LORD your God.'"
23 Then Moses spoke to the children

of Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones. So the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Sabbath of the Seventh Year

25 And the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, [2]"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. [3]Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; [4]but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. [5]What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, *for* it is a year of rest for the land. [6]And the sabbath *produce* of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, [7]for your livestock and the beasts that *are* in your land—all its produce shall be for food.

The Year of Jubilee

[8]'And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. [9]Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. [10]And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. [11]That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather *the grapes* of your untended vine. [12]For it *is* the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field.

[13]'In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession. [14]And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another. [15]According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you. [16]According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you *according* to the number *of the years* of the crops. [17]Therefore you shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God; for I *am* the LORD your God.

Provisions for the Seventh Year

[18]'So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. [19]Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety.

[20]'And if you say, "What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?" [21]Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. [22]And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat *of* the old *harvest*.



Redemption of Property

23 'The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land *is* Mine; for you *are* strangers and sojourners with Me. 24 And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.

25 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold *some* of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. 26 Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, 27 then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. 28 But if he is not able to have *it* restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.

29 'If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; *within* a full year he may redeem it. 30 But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee. 31 However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee. 32 Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, *and* the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. 33 And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites *are* their possession among the children of Israel. 34 But the field of the common-land of their cities may not be sold, for it *is* their perpetual possession.

Lending to the Poor

35 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. 36 Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. 37 You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. 38 I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan *and* to be your God.

The Law Concerning Slavery

39 'And if *one* of your brethren *who dwells* by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. 40 As a hired servant *and* a sojourner he shall be with you, *and* shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. 41 And *then* he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers. 42 For they *are* My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. 43 You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God. 44 And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have—from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. 45 Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. 46 And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them* as a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor.

47 'Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and *one of* your brethren *who dwells* by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, 48 after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; 49 or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or *anyone* who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself. 50 Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; *it shall be* according to the time of a hired servant for him. 51 If

Gospel Songs

If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit . . . I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.

LEVITICUS 26:3, 4, 12

SOMETIMES IT takes a child to remind us what it means to truly have faith in our Father. That's what Civilla Martin and her husband, Rev. Walter Martin, discovered one Sunday. Rev. Martin was a renowned evangelist in the early 1900s, and he and his wife had also composed a number of hymns and gospel songs. He was in the process of compiling a songbook for the president of a New York Bible school when he agreed to preach at a distant church one Sunday afternoon. As he was preparing to go, Civilla began to feel sick, and he felt apprehensive about leaving her behind. Rev. Martin was feeling torn between his commitment to preach and his desire to take care of his wife, but his son helped clear things up for him by asking, "Father, don't you think that if God wants you to preach today, He will take care of Mother while you are away?"

Needless to say, Rev. Martin listened to his son's wise words, trusted the Lord to take care of his wife, and left to preach. And God was faithful in immeasurable ways that day. Rev. Martin saw many people come to faith in Christ after he gave his sermon. But when he arrived home, he was in for another blessing. In her husband's absence, Mrs. Martin had begun to feel well enough to compose the lyrics to "God Will Take Care of You," inspired by her son's faith. She showed her husband when he returned home and he helped put it to music. They completed the song in time for him to include it in the songbook he had been working on, and as a result, generations of people have been blessed by it. The Lord knows our steps before we take them, and "whate'er betide," He will take care of us.

God Will Take Care of You

Civilla D. Martin, 1904

God Will Take Care of You
Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.

Refrain:
God will take care of you,
Through every day, o'er all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you.

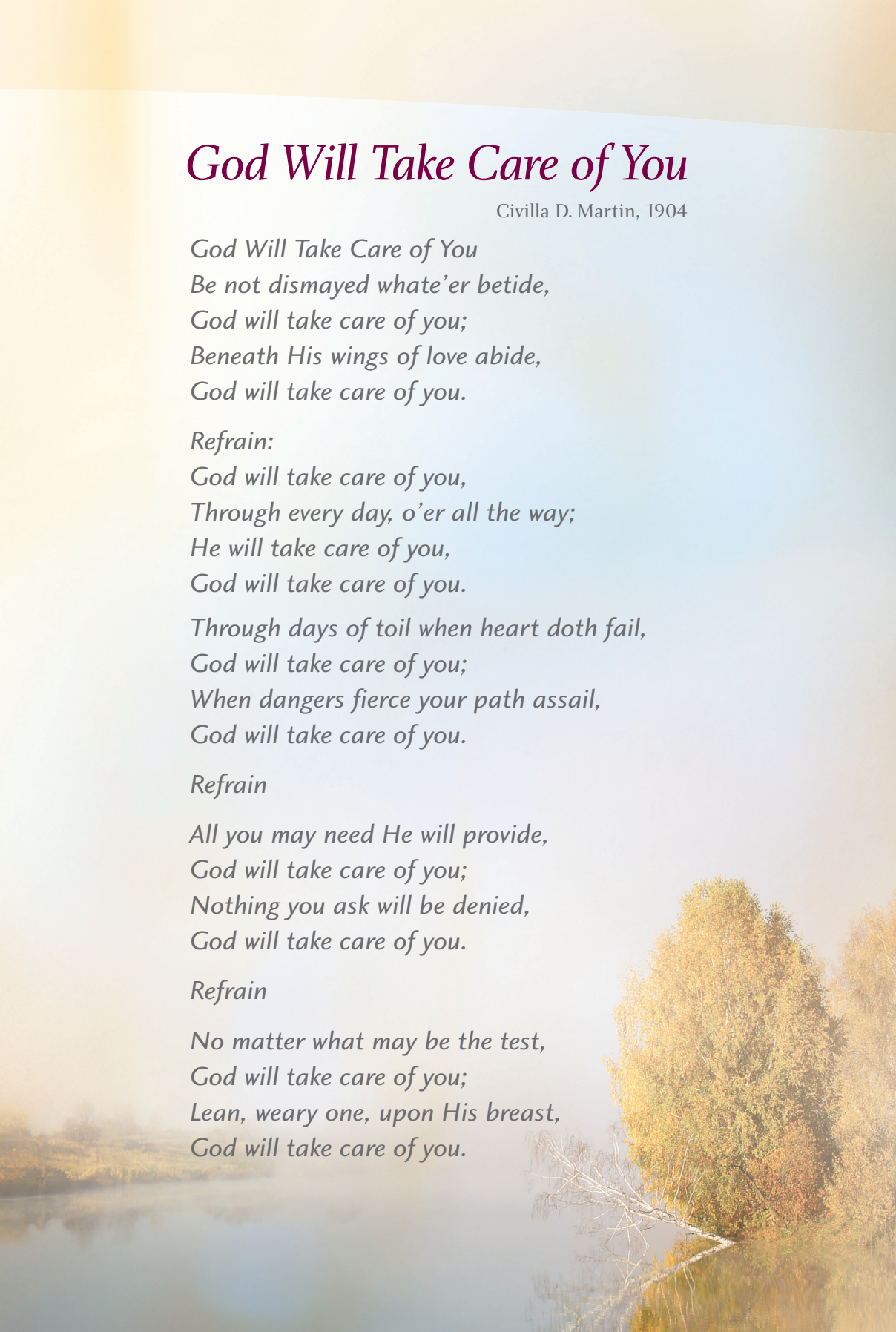
Through days of toil when heart doth fail,
God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you.

Refrain

All you may need He will provide,
God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied,
God will take care of you.

Refrain

No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon His breast,
God will take care of you.



there are still many years *remaining,* according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought. 52And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, *and* according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption. 53He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight. 54And if he is not redeemed in these *years,* then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee—he and his children with him. 55For the children of Israel *are* servants to Me; they *are* My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

Promise of Blessing and Retribution

26 'You shall not make idols for yourselves;
neither a carved image nor a *sacred* pillar shall you rear up for yourselves;
nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it;
for I *am* the LORD your God.
2 You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary:
I *am* the LORD.

3 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them,
4 then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.
5 Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing;
you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.
6 I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make *you* afraid;
I will rid the land of evil beasts,
and the sword will not go through your land.
7 You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you.
8 Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight;
your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.



LARRY WAYNE MORBITT • 17 Years as "Piangi" in *Phantom of the Opera,* Broadway and Las Vegas

Nevertheless no devoted offering that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, both man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted offering is most holy to the LORD. | LEVITICUS 27:28

As a young teenager in middle school I was asked to give the devotion for our youth group meeting one Sunday afternoon. I used Leviticus 27:28 as my reference. I was excited because it was just then that I began to understand the idea of personal consecration.

My parents had made the decision years earlier to raise my brother and me without television. It was our custom every weeknight to systematically read aloud through the Bible as a family. As you can imagine it was not always easy for two boys to focus their attention on the task at hand. But as we laboriously worked our way through Leviticus, I was struck by the detail given to the ideas that I later understood as atonement, sacrifice, and holiness. This was especially so in the last chapter, which deals with gifts offered beyond

9 'For I will look on you favorably and
make you fruitful, multiply you and
confirm My covenant with you.
10 You shall eat the old harvest, and clear
out the old because of the new.
11 I will set My tabernacle among you, and
My soul shall not abhor you.
12 I will walk among you and be your God,
and you shall be My people.
13 I *am* the LORD your God, who brought
you out of the land of Egypt, that *you*
should not be their slaves;
I have broken the bands of your yoke
and made you walk upright.

14 'But if you do not obey Me, and do not
observe all these commandments,
15 and if you despise My statutes, or if
your soul abhors My judgments,
so that you do not perform all
My commandments, *but* break My
covenant,
16 I also will do this to you:
I will even appoint terror over you,
wasting disease and fever which
shall consume the eyes and cause
sorrow of heart.
And you shall sow your seed in vain, for
your enemies shall eat it.
17 I will set My face against you, and you
shall be defeated by your enemies.
Those who hate you shall reign over
you, and you shall flee when no one
pursues you.

18 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me,
then I will punish you seven times
more for your sins.
19 I will break the pride of your power;
I will make your heavens like iron and
your earth like bronze.
20 And your strength shall be spent in vain;
for your land shall not yield its produce,
nor shall the trees of the land yield
their fruit.

21 'Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are
not willing to obey Me, I will bring
on you seven times more plagues,
according to your sins.
22 I will also send wild beasts among you,
which shall rob you of your children,
destroy your livestock, and make you
few in number;

one's tithes by which a worshipper expressed his deepest and heartfelt affection to God.

These words stood out: "Every devoted thing is most holy unto to the LORD." Here the term *devoted* refers to those things that are required. Yet, I realized that Christ's great sacrificial gift on the Cross, indeed, required everything that is mine to give. It was in those green days that I began to understand that abilities in my trust would have ultimate value as I gave them back to God. In doing so they became holy. What a powerful idea! Even that which may be ordinary, if given in complete abandon, can be used to bring glory and honor to God's kingdom. That moment of realization began a life-long quest for and understanding of complete consecration in my life!

and your highways shall be desolate.

23 'And if by these things you are not
reformed by Me, but walk contrary
to Me,
24 then I also will walk contrary to you, and
I will punish you yet seven times for
your sins.
25 And I will bring a sword against you that
will execute the vengeance of the
covenant;
when you are gathered together within
your cities I will send pestilence
among you;
and you shall be delivered into the hand
of the enemy.
26 When I have cut off your supply of bread,
ten women shall bake your bread in
one oven, and they shall bring back
your bread by weight, and you shall
eat and not be satisfied.

27 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me,
but walk contrary to Me,
28 then I also will walk contrary to you in
fury;
and I, even I, will chastise you seven
times for your sins.
29 You shall eat the flesh of your sons,
and you shall eat the flesh of your
daughters.
30 I will destroy your high places, cut down
your incense altars, and cast your
carcasses on the lifeless forms of
your idols;
and My soul shall abhor you.
31 I will lay your cities waste and bring your
sanctuaries to desolation, and I will
not smell the fragrance of your sweet
aromas.
32 I will bring the land to desolation, and
your enemies who dwell in it shall be
astonished at it.
33 I will scatter you among the nations and
draw out a sword after you;
your land shall be desolate and your
cities waste.
34 Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as
long as it lies desolate and you *are* in
your enemies' land;
then the land shall rest and enjoy its
sabbaths.
35 As long as *it* lies desolate it shall rest—
for the time it did not rest on your
sabbaths when you dwelt in it.

36 'And as for those of you who are left, I
will send faintness into their hearts
in the lands of their enemies;
the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause
them to flee;
they shall flee as though fleeing from a
sword, and they shall fall when no
one pursues.
37 They shall stumble over one another, as
it were before a sword, when no one
pursues;
and you shall have no *power* to stand
before your enemies.
38 You shall perish among the nations, and
the land of your enemies shall eat
you up.
39 And those of you who are left shall
waste away in their iniquity in your
enemies' lands;
also in their fathers' iniquities, which
are with them, they shall waste away.

40 '*But* if they confess their iniquity and the
iniquity of their fathers, with their
unfaithfulness in which they were
unfaithful to Me, and that they also
have walked contrary to Me,
41 and *that* I also have walked contrary to
them and have brought them into
the land of their enemies;
if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled,
and they accept their guilt—
42 then I will remember My covenant with
Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac
and My covenant with Abraham I
will remember;
I will remember the land.
43 The land also shall be left empty by
them, and will enjoy its sabbaths
while it lies desolate without them;
they will accept their guilt, because they
despised My judgments and because
their soul abhorred My statutes.
44 Yet for all that, when they are in the
land of their enemies, I will not cast
them away, nor shall I abhor them, to
utterly destroy them and break My
covenant with them;
for I *am* the LORD their God.

45 But for their sake I will remember the
covenant of their ancestors, whom I
brought out of the land of Egypt in
the sight of the nations, that I might
be their God:
I *am* the LORD.'"

46These *are* the statutes and judgments and laws which the LORD made between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

Redeeming Persons and Property Dedicated to God

27 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When a man consecrates by a vow certain persons to the LORD, according to your valuation, 3if your valuation is of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old, then your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 4If it *is* a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels; 5and if from five years old up to twenty years old, then your valuation for a male shall be twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels; 6and if from a month old up to five years old, then your valuation for a male shall be five shekels of silver, and for a female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver; 7and if from sixty years old and above, if *it is* a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels.

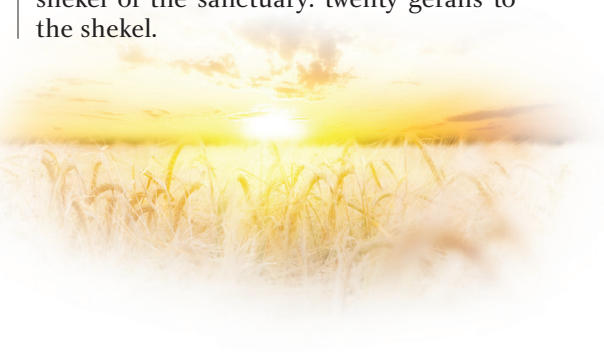
8'But if he is too poor to pay your valuation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall set a value for him; according to the ability of him who vowed, the priest shall value him.

9'If *it is* an animal that men may bring as an offering to the LORD, all that *anyone* gives to the LORD shall be holy. 10He shall not substitute it or exchange it, good for bad or bad for good; and if he at all exchanges animal for animal, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy. 11If *it is* an unclean animal which they do not offer as a sacrifice to the LORD, then he shall present the animal before the priest; 12and the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be. 13But if he *wants* at all *to* redeem it, then he must add one-fifth to your valuation.

14'And when a man dedicates his house *to be* holy to the LORD, then the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. 15If he who dedicated it *wants to* redeem his house, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall be his.

16'If a man dedicates to the LORD *part* of a field of his possession, then your valuation shall be according to the seed for it. A homer of barley seed *shall be valued* at fifty shekels of silver. 17If he dedicates his field from the Year of Jubilee, according to your valuation it shall stand. 18But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, then the priest shall reckon to him the money due according to the years that remain till the Year of Jubilee, and it shall be deducted from your valuation. 19And if he who dedicates the field ever wishes to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall belong to him. 20But if he does not want to redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed anymore; 21but the field, when it is released in the Jubilee, shall be holy to the LORD, as a devoted field; it shall be the possession of the priest.

22'And if a man dedicates to the LORD a field which he has bought, which is not the field of his possession, 23then the priest shall reckon to him the worth of your valuation, up to the Year of Jubilee, and he shall give your valuation on that day *as* a holy *offering* to the LORD. 24In the Year of Jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, to the one who *owned* the land as a possession. 25And all your valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs to the shekel.



[26]'But the firstborn of the animals, which should be the LORD's firstborn, no man shall dedicate; whether *it is* an ox or sheep, it *is* the LORD's. [27]And if *it is* an unclean animal, then he shall redeem *it* according to your valuation, and shall add one-fifth to it; or if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation.

[28]'Nevertheless no devoted *offering* that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, *both* man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted *offering is* most holy to the LORD. [29]No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, *but* shall surely be put to death. [30]And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD's. It *is* holy to the LORD. [31]If a man wants at all to redeem *any* of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. [32]And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. [33]He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.'"

[34]These *are* the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai.

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

Numbers



The First Census of Israel

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first *day* of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying:
2 "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male individually, 3 from twenty years old and above—all who *are able to* go to war in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies.
4 And with you there shall be a man from every tribe, each one the head of his father's house.
5 "These are the names of the men who shall stand with you: from Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; 6 from Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; 7 from Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; 8 from Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar; 9 from Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; 10 from the sons of Joseph: from Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; from Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; 11 from Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; 12 from Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; 13 from Asher, Pagiel the son of Ocran; 14 from Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel;[a] 15 from Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan." 16 These *were* chosen from the congregation, leaders of their fathers' tribes, heads of the divisions in Israel.
17 Then Moses and Aaron took these men who had been mentioned by name, 18 and they assembled all the congregation together on the first *day* of the second month; and they recited their ancestry by families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, each one individually.
19 As the LORD commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the Wilderness of Sinai.
20 Now the children of Reuben, Israel's oldest son, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, every male individually, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 21 those who were numbered of the tribe of Reuben *were* forty-six thousand five hundred.
22 From the children of Simeon, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, of those who were numbered, according to the number of names, every male individually, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 23 those who were numbered of the tribe of Simeon *were* fifty-nine thousand three hundred.
24 From the children of Gad, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 25 those who were numbered of the tribe of Gad *were* forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty.
26 From the children of Judah, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 27 those who were numbered of the tribe of Judah *were* seventy-four thousand six hundred.
28 From the children of Issachar, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 29 those who were numbered of the tribe of Issachar *were* fifty-four thousand four hundred.
30 From the children of Zebulun, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above,

1:14 [a] Spelled *Reuel* in 2:14

all who *were able to* go to war: [31]those who were numbered of the tribe of Zebulun *were* fifty-seven thousand four hundred.

[32]From the sons of Joseph, the children of Ephraim, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [33]those who were numbered of the tribe of Ephraim *were* forty thousand five hundred.

[34]From the children of Manasseh, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [35]those who were numbered of the tribe of Manasseh *were* thirty-two thousand two hundred.

[36]From the children of Benjamin, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [37]those who were numbered of the tribe of Benjamin *were* thirty-five thousand four hundred.

[38]From the children of Dan, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [39]those who were numbered of the tribe of Dan *were* sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

[40]From the children of Asher, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [41]those who were numbered of the tribe of Asher *were* forty-one thousand five hundred.

[42]From the children of Naphtali, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [43]those who were numbered of the tribe of Naphtali *were* fifty-three thousand four hundred.

[44]These are the ones who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each one representing his father's house. [45]So all who were numbered of the children of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war in Israel— [46]all who were numbered were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.

[47]But the Levites were not numbered among them by their fathers' tribe; [48]for the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying: [49]"Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor take a census of them among the children of Israel; [50]but you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall attend to it and camp around the tabernacle. [51]And when the tabernacle is to go forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it up. The outsider who comes near shall be put to death. [52]The children of Israel shall pitch their tents, everyone by his own camp, everyone by his own standard, according to their armies; [53]but the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the Testimony, that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the children of Israel; and the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony."

[54]Thus the children of Israel did; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they did.

The Tribes and Leaders by Armies

2 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: [2]"Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting. [3]On the east side, toward the rising of the sun, those of the standard of the forces with Judah shall camp according to their armies; and Nahshon the son of Amminadab *shall be* the leader of the children of Judah." [4]And his army was numbered at seventy-four thousand six hundred.

[5]"Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Issachar, and Nethanel the son of Zuar *shall be* the leader of the children of Issachar." [6]And his army was numbered at fifty-four thousand four hundred.

[7]"Then *comes* the tribe of Zebulun, and Eliab the son of Helon *shall be* the leader of the children of Zebulun." [8]And his army was numbered at fifty-seven thousand four

hundred. 9"All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Judah, one hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred—these shall break camp first.

10"On the south side *shall be* the standard of the forces with Reuben according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Reuben *shall be* Elizur the son of Shedeur." 11And his army was numbered at forty-six thousand five hundred.

12"Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the children of Simeon *shall be* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai." 13And his army was numbered at fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

14"Then *comes* the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the children of Gad *shall be* Eliasaph the son of Reuel."[a] 15And his army was numbered at forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty. 16"All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Reuben, one hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty—they shall be the second to break camp.

17"And the tabernacle of meeting shall move out with the camp of the Levites in the middle of the camps; as they camp, so they shall move out, everyone in his place, by their standards.

18"On the west side *shall be* the standard of the forces with Ephraim according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud." 19And his army was numbered at forty thousand five hundred.

20"Next to him *comes* the tribe of Manasseh, and the leader of the children of Manasseh *shall be* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur." 21And his army was numbered at thirty-two thousand two hundred.

22"Then *comes* the tribe of Benjamin, and the leader of the children of Benjamin *shall be* Abidan the son of Gideoni." 23And his army was numbered at thirty-five thousand four hundred. 24"All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Ephraim, one hundred and eight thousand one hundred—they shall be the third to break camp.

25"The standard of the forces with Dan *shall be* on the north side according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Dan *shall be* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai." 26And his army was numbered at sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

27"Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Asher, and the leader of the children of Asher *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran." 28And his army was numbered at forty-one thousand five hundred.

29"Then *comes* the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the children of Naphtali *shall be* Ahira the son of Enan." 30And his army was numbered at fifty-three thousand four hundred. 31"All who were numbered of the forces with Dan, one hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred—they shall break camp last, with their standards."

32These *are* the ones who were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses. All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces *were* six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. 33But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

34Thus the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses; so they camped by their standards and so they broke camp, each one by his family, according to their fathers' houses.

The Sons of Aaron

3 Now these *are* the records of Aaron and Moses when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. 2And these *are* the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3These *are* the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he consecrated to minister as priests. 4Nadab and Abihu had died before the LORD when they offered profane fire before the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father.

The Levites Serve in the Tabernacle

5And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 6"Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. 7And they shall attend to his needs and the needs of the whole

2:14 [a]Spelled *Deuel* in 1:14 and 7:42

congregation before the tabernacle of meeting, to do the work of the tabernacle. 8Also they shall attend to all the furnishings of the tabernacle of meeting, and to the needs of the children of Israel, to do the work of the tabernacle. 9And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they *are* given entirely to him[a] from among the children of Israel. 10So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

11Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 12"Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, 13because all the firstborn *are* Mine. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I *am* the LORD."

Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

JOHN WESLEY

Census of the Levites Commanded

14Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, saying: 15"Number the children of Levi by their fathers' houses, by their families; you shall number every male from a month old and above."

16So Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. 17These were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 18And these *are* the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei. 19And the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram, Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20And the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These *are* the families of the Levites by their fathers' houses.

21From Gershon *came* the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimites; these *were* the families of the Gershonites. 22Those who were numbered, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above—of those who were numbered *there were* seven thousand five hundred. 23The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle westward. 24And the leader of the father's house of the Gershonites *was* Eliasaph the son of Lael. 25The duties of the children of Gershon in the tabernacle of meeting *included* the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the screen for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, 26the screen for the door of the court, the hangings of the court which *are* around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords, according to all the work relating to them.

27From Kohath *came* the family of the Amramites, the family of the Izharites, the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites; these *were* the families of the Kohathites. 28According to the number of all the males, from a month old and above, *there were* eight thousand six[a] hundred keeping charge of the sanctuary. 29The families of the children of Kohath were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle. 30And the leader of the fathers' house of the families of the Kohathites *was* Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. 31Their duty *included* the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, the screen, and all the work relating to them.

32And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *was to be* chief over the leaders of the Levites, *with* oversight of those who kept charge of the sanctuary.

33From Merari *came* the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these *were* the families of Merari. 34And those who were numbered, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above, *were* six thousand two hundred. 35The leader of the fathers' house of the families of Merari *was* Zuriel the son of Abihail. These *were* to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. 36And the appointed duty of the children of Merari

3:9 [a]Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint read *Me* **3:28** [a]Some manuscripts of the Septuagint read *three.*

included the boards of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, its utensils, all the work relating to them, [37]and the pillars of the court all around, with their sockets, their pegs, and their cords.

[38]Moreover those who were to camp before the tabernacle on the east, before the tabernacle of meeting, *were* Moses, Aaron, and his sons, keeping charge of the sanctuary, to meet the needs of the children of Israel; but the outsider who came near was to be put to death. [39]All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, by their families, all the males from a month old and above, *were* twenty-two thousand.

Levites Dedicated Instead of the Firstborn

[40]Then the LORD said to Moses: "Number all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from a month old and above, and take the number of their names. [41]And you shall take the Levites for Me—I *am* the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the livestock of the children of Israel." [42]So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the children of Israel, as the LORD commanded him. [43]And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names from a month old and above, of those who were numbered of them, were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three.

[44]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: [45]"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock. The Levites shall be Mine: I *am* the LORD. [46]And for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who are more than the number of the Levites, [47]you shall take five shekels for each one individually; you shall take *them* in the currency of the shekel of the sanctuary, the shekel of twenty gerahs. [48]And you shall give the money, with which the excess number of them is redeemed, to Aaron and his sons."

[49]So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those who were redeemed by the Levites. [50]From the firstborn of the children of Israel he took the money, one thousand three hundred and sixty-five *shekels,* according to the shekel of the sanctuary. [51]And Moses gave their redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Duties of the Sons of Kohath

4 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: [2]"Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' house, [3]from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting.

[4]"This *is* the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of meeting, *relating to* the most holy things: [5]When the camp prepares to journey, Aaron and his sons shall come, and they shall take down the covering veil and cover the ark of the Testimony with it. [6]Then they shall put on it a covering of badger skins, and spread over *that* a cloth entirely of blue; and they shall insert its poles.

[7]"On the table of showbread they shall spread a blue cloth, and put on it the dishes, the pans, the bowls, and the pitchers for pouring; and the showbread[a] shall be on it. [8]They shall spread over them a scarlet cloth, and cover the same with a covering of badger skins; and they shall insert its poles. [9]And they shall take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand of the light, with its lamps, its wick-trimmers, its trays, and all its oil vessels, with which they service it. [10]Then they shall put it with all its utensils in a covering of badger skins, and put *it* on a carrying beam.

[11]"Over the golden altar they shall spread a blue cloth, and cover it with a covering of badger skins; and they shall insert its poles. [12]Then they shall take all the utensils of service with which they minister in the sanctuary, put *them* in a blue cloth, cover them with a covering of badger skins, and put *them* on a carrying beam. [13]Also they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth over it. [14]They shall put on it all its implements with which they minister there—the firepans, the forks, the shovels, the basins, and

4:7 [a]Literally *the continual bread*

all the utensils of the altar—and they shall spread on it a covering of badger skins, and insert its poles. 15And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry *them;* but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die.

"These *are* the things in the tabernacle of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

16"The appointed duty of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *is* the oil for the light, the sweet incense, the daily grain offering, the anointing oil, the oversight of all the tabernacle, of all that *is* in it, with the sanctuary and its furnishings."

17Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 18"Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites; 19but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task. 20But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, lest they die."

Duties of the Sons of Gershon

21Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 22"Also take a census of the sons of Gershon, by their fathers' house, by their families. 23From thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, you shall number them, all who enter to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting. 24This *is* the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and carrying: 25They shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and the tabernacle of meeting *with* its covering, the covering of badger skins that *is* on it, the screen for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, 26the screen for the door of the gate of the court, the hangings of the court which *are* around the tabernacle and altar, and their cords, all the furnishings for their service and all that is made for these things: so shall they serve.

27"Aaron and his sons shall assign all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, all their tasks and all their service. And you shall appoint to them all their tasks as their duty. 28This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of meeting. And their duties *shall be* under the authority[a] of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

Duties of the Sons of Merari

29"*As for* the sons of Merari, you shall number them by their families and by their fathers' house. 30From thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, you shall number them, everyone who enters the service to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 31And this *is* what they must carry as all their service for the tabernacle of meeting: the boards of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, 32and the pillars around the court with their sockets, pegs, and cords, with all their furnishings and all their service; and you shall assign *to each man* by name the items he must carry. 33This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Merari, as all their service for the tabernacle of meeting, under the authority[a] of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest."

Census of the Levites

34And Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites by their families and by their fathers' house, 35from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tabernacle of meeting; 36and those who were numbered by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. 37These *were* the ones who were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all who might serve in the tabernacle of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

38And those who were numbered of the sons of Gershon, by their families and by their fathers' house, 39from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tabernacle of meeting— 40those who were numbered by their families, by their fathers' house, were two thousand six hundred and thirty. 41These *are* the ones who were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all who might serve in the tabernacle of

4:28 [a]Literally *hand* **4:33** [a]Literally *hand*

meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD.

42Those of the families of the sons of Merari who were numbered, by their families, by their fathers' house, 43from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tabernacle of meeting— 44those who were numbered by their families were three thousand two hundred. 45These *are* the ones who were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

46All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel numbered, by their families and by their fathers' houses, 47from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who came to do the work of service and the work of bearing burdens in the tabernacle of meeting— 48those who were numbered were eight thousand five hundred and eighty.

49According to the commandment of the LORD they were numbered by the hand of Moses, each according to his service and according to his task; thus were they numbered by him, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Ceremonially Unclean Persons Isolated

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, everyone who has a discharge, and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse. 3You shall put out both male and female; you shall put them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camps in the midst of which I dwell." 4And the children of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; as the LORD spoke to Moses, so the children of Israel did.

Confession and Restitution

5Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6"Speak to the children of Israel: 'When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the LORD, and that person is guilty, 7then he shall confess the sin which he has committed. He shall make restitution for his trespass in full, plus one-fifth of it, and give *it* to the one he has wronged. 8But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for the wrong *must go* to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of the atonement with which atonement is made for him. 9Every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his. 10And every man's holy things shall be his; whatever any man gives the priest shall be his.'"

Concerning Unfaithful Wives

11And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'If any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him, 13and a man lies with her carnally, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and it is concealed that she has defiled herself, and *there was* no witness against her, nor was she caught— 14if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, who has defiled herself; or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, although she has not defiled herself— 15then the man shall bring his wife to the priest. He shall bring the offering required for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, because it *is* a grain offering of jealousy, an offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance.

16'And the priest shall bring her near, and



set her before the LORD. 17The priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put *it* into the water. 18Then the priest shall stand the woman before the LORD, uncover the woman's head, and put the offering for remembering in her hands, which *is* the grain offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. 19And the priest shall put her under oath, and say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you, and if you have not gone astray to uncleanness *while* under your husband's *authority,* be free from this bitter water that brings a curse. 20But if you have gone astray *while* under your husband's *authority,* and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has lain with you"— 21then the priest shall put the woman under the oath of the curse, and he shall say to the woman—"the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh rot and your belly swell; 22and may this water that causes the curse go into your stomach, and make *your* belly swell and *your* thigh rot."

'Then the woman shall say, "Amen, so be it."

23'Then the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall scrape *them* off into the bitter water. 24And he shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter her *to become* bitter. 25Then the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, shall wave the offering before the LORD, and bring it to the altar; 26and the priest shall take a handful of the offering, as its memorial portion, burn *it* on the altar, and afterward make the woman drink the water. 27When he has made her drink the water, then it shall be, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, that the water that brings a curse will enter her *and become* bitter, and her belly will swell, her thigh will rot, and the woman will become a curse among her people. 28But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she shall be free and may conceive children.

29'This *is* the law of jealousy, when a wife, *while* under her husband's *authority,* goes astray and defiles herself, 30or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, and he becomes jealous of his wife; then he shall stand the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute all this law upon her. 31Then the man shall be free from iniquity, but that woman shall bear her guilt.'"

The Law of the Nazirite

6 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, 3he shall separate himself from wine and *similar* drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from *similar* drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. 4All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.

5'All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. *Then* he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. 7He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God *is* on his head. 8All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.

9'And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. 10Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting; 11and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and *the* other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that same day. 12He shall consecrate to the LORD the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

13'Now this *is* the law of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled,

he shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 14And he shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering, 15a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their grain offering with their drink offerings.

16'Then the priest shall bring *them* before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering; 17and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering. 18Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put *it* on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.

19'And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put *them* upon the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated *hair,* 20and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD; they *are* holy for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.'

21"This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the LORD the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes, so he must do according to the law of his separation."

The Priestly Blessing

22And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 23"Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

24 "The LORD bless you and keep you;
25 The LORD make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
26 The LORD lift up His countenance
upon you,
And give you peace." '

27"So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

Offerings of the Leaders

7 Now it came to pass, when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, that he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings, and the altar and all its utensils; so he anointed them and consecrated them. 2Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' houses, who *were* the leaders of the tribes and over those who were numbered, made an offering. 3And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for *every* two of the leaders, and for each one an ox; and they presented them before the tabernacle.

4Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 5"Accept *these* from them, that they may be used in doing the work of the tabernacle of meeting; and you shall give them to the Levites, *to* every man according to his service." 6So Moses took the carts and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. 7Two carts and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service; 8and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the authority[a] of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. 9But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because theirs *was* the service of the holy things, *which* they carried on their shoulders.

10Now the leaders offered the dedication *offering* for the altar when it was anointed; so the leaders offered their offering before the altar. 11For the LORD said to Moses, "They shall offer their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar."

12And the one who offered his offering on the first day *was* Nahshon the son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah. 13His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 14one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 15one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 16one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 17and for the sacrifice of peace

7:8 [a]Literally *hand*

offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

18On the second day Nethanel the son of Zuar, leader of Issachar, presented *an offering.* 19*For* his offering he offered one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 20one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 21one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 22one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 23and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Nethanel the son of Zuar.

24On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, leader of the children of Zebulun, *presented an offering.* 25His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 26one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 27one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 28one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 29and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

30On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, leader of the children of Reuben, *presented an offering.* 31His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 32one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 33one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 34one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 35and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

36On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, leader of the children of Simeon, *presented an offering.* 37His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 38one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 39one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 40one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 41and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

42On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel,[a] leader of the children of Gad, *presented an offering.* 43His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 44one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 45one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 46one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 47and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

48On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, leader of the children of Ephraim, *presented an offering.* 49His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 50one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 51one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 52one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 53and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

54On the eighth day Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, leader of the children of Manasseh, *presented an offering.* 55His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one

7:42 [a]Spelled *Reuel* in 2:14

silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; [56]one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; [57]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; [58]one kid of the goats as a sin offering; [59]and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

[60]On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, leader of the children of Benjamin, *presented an offering*. [61]His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; [62]one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; [63]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; [64]one kid of the goats as a sin offering; [65]and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

[66]On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, leader of the children of Dan, *presented an offering*. [67]His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; [68]one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; [69]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; [70]one kid of the goats as a sin offering; [71]and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

[72]On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, leader of the children of Asher, *presented an offering*. [73]His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; [74]one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; [75]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; [76]one kid of the goats as a sin offering; [77]and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

[78]On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, leader of the children of Naphtali, *presented an offering*. [79]His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; [80]one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; [81]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; [82]one kid of the goats as a sin offering; [83]and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

[84]This *was* the dedication *offering* for the altar from the leaders of Israel, when it was anointed: twelve silver platters, twelve silver bowls, and twelve gold pans. [85]Each silver platter *weighed* one hundred and thirty *shekels* and each bowl seventy *shekels*. All the silver of the vessels *weighed* two thousand four hundred *shekels,* according to the shekel of the sanctuary. [86]The twelve gold pans full of incense *weighed* ten *shekels* apiece, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; all the gold of the pans *weighed* one hundred and twenty *shekels*. [87]All the oxen for the burnt offering *were* twelve young bulls, the rams twelve, the male lambs in their first year twelve, with their grain offering, and the kids of the goats as a sin offering twelve. [88]And all the oxen for the sacrifice of peace offerings were twenty-four bulls, the rams sixty, the male goats sixty, and the lambs in their first year sixty. This *was* the dedication *offering* for the altar after it was anointed.

[89]Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that *was* on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.

Gospel Songs

At the command of the LORD the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped. Even when the cloud continued long, many days above the tabernacle, the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD and did not journey.

NUMBERS 9:18, 19

WHAT DOES it mean for God to lead us? God leads not like a politician leads his constituents, but as a Father leads a child, holding her hand, showing her the way by going before her, opening doors, helping her navigate the various obstacles on the path to their destination. Fanny Crosby grew up with a special appreciation for faithful leading, having been blind since her infancy. But more than that, she had an understanding of her need to be led through life by Christ, knowing that "we walk by faith, not by sight." So it was with that faith that she trusted the Lord for her needs. In one instance, she was praying for God to meet a specific financial need she was facing, and just a few minutes later a stranger approached her, offering the exact amount of money that she needed. Fanny later explained, "I have no way of accounting for this except to believe that God put it into the heart of this good man to bring the money. My first thought was that it is so wonderful the way the Lord leads me." It was this experience that inspired her to write "All the Way My Savior Leads Me." What have we to ask besides the Savior's leading? Though our weary steps may falter, all the way our Savior leads us!



All The Way My Savior Leads Me

Fanny J. Crosby, 1875

1. *All the way my Savior leads me;*
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my Guide?
Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well;
For I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.

2. *All the way my Savior leads me,*
Cheers each winding path I tread;
Gives me grace for every trial,
Feeds me with the living Bread.
Though my weary steps may falter,
And my soul athirst may be,
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo! A spring of joy I see;
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo! A spring of joy I see.

3. *All the way my Savior leads me*
O the fullness of His love!
Perfect rest to me is promised
In my Father's house above.
When my spirit, clothed immortal,
Wings its flight to realms of day
This my song through endless ages—
Jesus led me all the way;
This my song through endless ages—
Jesus led me all the way.

Arrangement of the Lamps

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
2 "Speak to Aaron, and say to him, 'When
you arrange the lamps, the seven lamps
shall give light in front of the lampstand.'"
3 And Aaron did so; he arranged the lamps
to face toward the front of the lampstand,
as the LORD commanded Moses. 4 Now this
workmanship of the lampstand *was* ham-
mered gold; from its shaft to its flowers it
was hammered work. According to the pat-
tern which the LORD had shown Moses, so
he made the lampstand.

Cleansing and Dedication of the Levites

5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
6 "Take the Levites from among the chil-
dren of Israel and cleanse them *ceremonially.*
7 Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them:
Sprinkle water of purification on them, and
let them shave all their body, and let them
wash their clothes, and *so* make themselves
clean. 8 Then let them take a young bull with
its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil,
and you shall take another young bull as a
sin offering. 9 And you shall bring the Levites
before the tabernacle of meeting, and you
shall gather together the whole congrega-
tion of the children of Israel. 10 So you shall
bring the Levites before the LORD, and the
children of Israel shall lay their hands on the
Levites; 11 and Aaron shall offer the Levites
before the LORD *like* a wave offering from the
children of Israel, that they may perform the
work of the LORD. 12 Then the Levites shall lay
their hands on the heads of the young bulls,
and you shall offer one as a sin offering and
the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to
make atonement for the Levites.

13 "And you shall stand the Levites before
Aaron and his sons, and then offer them
like a wave offering to the LORD. 14 Thus you
shall separate the Levites from among the
children of Israel, and the Levites shall be
Mine. 15 After that the Levites shall go in to
service the tabernacle of meeting. So you
shall cleanse them and offer them *like* a
wave offering. 16 For they *are* wholly given
to Me from among the children of Israel;
I have taken them for Myself instead of all
who open the womb, the firstborn of all
the children of Israel. 17 For all the firstborn
among the children of Israel *are* Mine, *both*
man and beast; on the day that I struck all
the firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanc-
tified them to Myself. 18 I have taken the
Levites instead of all the firstborn of the
children of Israel. 19 And I have given the
Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from
among the children of Israel, to do the work
for the children of Israel in the tabernacle
of meeting, and to make atonement for the
children of Israel, that there be no plague
among the children of Israel when the chil-
dren of Israel come near the sanctuary."

20 Thus Moses and Aaron and all the
congregation of the children of Israel did
to the Levites; according to all that the
LORD commanded Moses concerning the
Levites, so the children of Israel did to
them. 21 And the Levites purified themselves
and washed their clothes; then Aaron pre-
sented them *like* a wave offering before the
LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them
to cleanse them. 22 After that the Levites
went in to do their work in the tabernacle
of meeting before Aaron and his sons; as
the LORD commanded Moses concerning
the Levites, so they did to them.

23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
24 "This *is* what *pertains* to the Levites: From
twenty-five years old and above one may
enter to perform service in the work of the
tabernacle of meeting; 25 and at the age of
fifty years they must cease performing this
work, and shall work no more. 26 They may
minister with their brethren in the taberna-
cle of meeting, to attend to needs, but they
themselves shall do no work. Thus you shall
do to the Levites regarding their duties."

The Second Passover

9 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the
Wilderness of Sinai, in the first month
of the second year after they had come
out of the land of Egypt, saying: 2 "Let the
children of Israel keep the Passover at its
appointed time. 3 On the fourteenth day
of this month, at twilight, you shall keep
it at its appointed time. According to all
its rites and ceremonies you shall keep
it." 4 So Moses told the children of Israel
that they should keep the Passover. 5 And
they kept the Passover on the fourteenth
day of the first month, at twilight, in the

Wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.

6Now there were *certain* men who were defiled by a human corpse, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day; and they came before Moses and Aaron that day. 7And those men said to him, "We *became* defiled by a human corpse. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the children of Israel?"

8And Moses said to them, "Stand still, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you."

9Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or *is* far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD's Passover. 11On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones. According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it. 13But the man who *is* clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.

14'And if a stranger dwells among you, and would keep the LORD's Passover, he must do so according to the rite of the Passover and according to its ceremony; you shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger and the native of the land.'"

The Cloud and the Fire

15Now on the day that the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the Testimony; from evening until morning it was above the tabernacle like the appearance of fire. 16So it was always: the cloud covered it *by day,* and the appearance of fire by night. 17Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents. 18At the command of the LORD the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped. 19Even when the cloud continued long, many days above the tabernacle, the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD and did not journey. 20So it was, when the cloud was above the tabernacle a few days: according to the command of the LORD they would remain encamped, and according to the command of the LORD they would journey. 21So it was, when the cloud remained only from evening until morning: when the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they would journey; whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud was taken up, they would journey. 22*Whether it was* two days, a month, or a year that the cloud remained above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would remain encamped and not journey; but when it was taken up, they would journey. 23At the command of the LORD they remained encamped, and at the command of the LORD they journeyed; they kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Two Silver Trumpets

10 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. 3When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 4But if they blow *only* one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you. 5When you sound the advance, the camps that lie on the east side shall then begin their journey. 6When you sound the advance the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall begin their journey; they shall sound the call for them to begin their journeys. 7And when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but not sound the advance. 8The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and these shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations.

9"When you go to war in your land

against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. 10Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I *am* the LORD your God."

Departure from Sinai

11Now it came to pass on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. 12And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran. 13So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

14The standard of the camp of the children of Judah set out first according to their armies; over their army was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 15Over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar *was* Nethanel the son of Zuar. 16And over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun *was* Eliab the son of Helon.

17Then the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle.

18And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Elizur the son of Shedeur. 19Over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon *was* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 20And over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad *was* Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

21Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things. (The tabernacle would be prepared for their arrival.)

22And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Elishama the son of Ammihud. 23Over the army of the tribe of the children of Manasseh *was* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 24And over the army of the tribe of the children of Benjamin *was* Abidan the son of Gideoni.

25Then the standard of the camp of the children of Dan (the rear guard of all the camps) set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26Over the army of the tribe of the children of Asher *was* Pagiel the son of Ocran. 27And over the army of the tribe of the children of Naphtali *was* Ahira the son of Enan.

28Thus *was* the order of march of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they began their journey.

29Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel[a] the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things to Israel."

30And he said to him, "I will not go, but I will depart to my *own* land and to my relatives."

31So *Moses* said, "Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes. 32And it shall be, if you go with us—indeed it shall be—that whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same we will do to you."

33So they departed from the mountain of the LORD on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. 34And the cloud of the LORD *was* above them by day when they went out from the camp.

35So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said:

"Rise up, O LORD!
Let Your enemies be scattered,
And let those who hate You flee before You."

36And when it rested, he said:

"Return, O LORD,
To the many thousands of Israel."

The People Complain

11 Now *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard *it,* and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them,

10:29 [a]Septuagint reads *Raguel* (compare Exodus 2:18).

and consumed *some* in the outskirts of the camp. 2Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched. 3So he called the name of the place Taberah,[a] because the fire of the LORD had burned among them.

4Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? 5We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6but now our whole being *is* dried up; *there is* nothing at all except this manna *before* our eyes!"

7Now the manna *was* like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium. 8The people went about and gathered *it,* ground *it* on millstones or beat *it* in the mortar, cooked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil. 9And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it.

10Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. 11So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me? 12Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child,' to the land which You swore to their fathers? 13Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' 14I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden *is* too heavy for me. 15If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!"

The Seventy Elders

16So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. 17Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that *is* upon you and will put *the same* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear *it* yourself alone. 18Then you shall say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For *it was* well with us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. 19You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, 20but *for* a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?" '"

21And Moses said, "The people whom I *am* among *are* six hundred thousand men on foot; yet You have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat *for* a whole month.' 22Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?"

23And the LORD said to Moses, "Has the LORD's arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not."

24So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. 25Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that *was* upon him, and placed *the same* upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did *so* again.[a]

26But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one *was* Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they *were* among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. 27And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

28So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, *one* of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!"

29Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD's

11:3 [a]Literally *Burning* **11:25** [a]Targum and Vulgate read *did not cease.*

people were prophets *and* that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" 30And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

The LORD Sends Quail

31Now a wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left *them* fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. 32And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp. 33But while the meat *was* still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. 34So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah,[a] because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.

35From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Hazeroth.

Dissension of Aaron and Miriam

12 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard *it*. 3(Now the man Moses *was* very humble, more than all men who *were* on the face of the earth.)

4Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out. 5Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood *in* the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. 6Then He said,

"Hear now My words:
If there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision;
I speak to him in a dream.
7 Not so with My servant Moses;
He *is* faithful in all My house.
8 I speak with him face to face,
Even plainly, and not in dark sayings;
And he sees the form of the LORD.
Why then were you not afraid
To speak against My servant Moses?"

9So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed. 10And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam *became* leprous, as *white as* snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. 11So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please do not lay *this* sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. 12Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!"

13So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"

14Then the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received *again*." 15So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in *again*. 16And afterward the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.

Spies Sent into Canaan

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them."

3So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who *were* heads of the children of Israel. 4Now these *were* their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; 5from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; 6from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 7from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; 8from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea[a] the son of Nun; 9from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; 10from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the

11:34 [a]Literally *Graves of Craving* **13:8** [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Oshea*.

son of Sodi; [11]from the tribe of Joseph, *that is,* from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi; [12]from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; [13]from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; [14]from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; [15]from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

[16]These *are* the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea[a] the son of Nun, Joshua.

[17]Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, "Go up this *way* into the South, and go up to the mountains, [18]and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it *are* strong or weak, few or many; [19]whether the land they dwell in *is* good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit *are* like camps or strongholds; [20]whether the land *is* rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time *was* the season of the first ripe grapes.

[21]So they went up and spied out the land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath. [22]And they went up through the South and came to Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, *were* there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) [23]Then they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. *They* also *brought* some of the pomegranates and figs. [24]The place was called the Valley of Eshcol,[a] because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there. [25]And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

[26]Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. [27]Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this *is* its fruit. [28]Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land *are* strong; the cities *are* fortified *and* very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. [29]The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan."

[30]Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

[31]But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they *are* stronger than we." [32]And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies *is* a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it *are* men of *great* stature. [33]There we saw the giants[a] (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

Israel Refuses to Enter Canaan

14 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. [2]And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! [3]Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" [4]So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

[5]Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

[6]But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *who were* among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; [7]and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out *is* an exceedingly good land. [8]If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.'[a] [9]Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they *are* our bread; their protection has departed from them,

13:16 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Oshea.* **13:24** [a]Literally *Cluster*
13:33 [a]Hebrew *nephilim* **14:8** [a]Exodus 3:8

and the LORD *is* with us. Do not fear them."
10And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.

Moses Intercedes for the People

11Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? 12I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."
13And Moses said to the LORD: "Then the Egyptians will hear *it,* for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, 14and they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, *are* among these people; that You, LORD, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15Now *if* You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, 16'Because the LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.' 17And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, 18'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears *the guilty,* visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generation.*'[a] 19Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."
20Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; 21but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD— 22because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. 24But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it. 25Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea."

Death Sentence on the Rebels

26And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27"How long *shall I bear with* this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. 28Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 30Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 31But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32But *as for* you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, *namely* forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'"
36Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, 37those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. 38But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

A Futile Invasion Attempt

39Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people

14:18 [a]Exodus 34:6, 7

mourned greatly. 40And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!"

41And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed. 42Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD *is* not among you. 43For the Amalekites and the Canaanites *are* there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."

44But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp. 45Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

Laws of Grain and Drink Offerings

15 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you, 3and you make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or in your appointed feasts, to make a sweet aroma to the LORD, from the herd or the flock, 4then he who presents his offering to the LORD shall bring a grain offering of one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil; 5and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering you shall prepare with the burnt offering or the sacrifice, for each lamb. 6Or for a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil; 7and as a drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a sweet aroma to the LORD. 8And when you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, or as a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, or as a peace offering to the LORD, 9then shall be offered with the young bull a grain offering of three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil; 10and you shall bring as the drink offering half a hin of wine as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

11'Thus it shall be done for each young bull, for each ram, or for each lamb or young goat. 12According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do with everyone according to their number. 13All who are native-born shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 14And if a stranger dwells with you, or whoever *is* among you throughout your generations, and would present an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD, just as you do, so shall he do. 15One ordinance *shall be* for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells *with you,* an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you.'"[a]

17Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land to which I bring you, 19then it will be, when you eat of the bread of the land, that you shall offer up a heave offering to the LORD. 20You shall offer up a cake of the first of your ground meal *as* a heave offering; as a heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall you offer it up. 21Of the first of your ground meal you shall give to the LORD a heave offering throughout your generations.

Laws Concerning Unintentional Sin

22'If you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments which the LORD has spoken to Moses— 23all that the LORD has commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day the LORD gave commandment and onward throughout your generations— 24then it will be, if it is unintentionally committed, without the knowledge of the congregation, that the whole congregation shall offer one young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one kid of the goats as a sin offering. 25So the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it was unintentional; they shall bring their offering, an offering made by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the

15:16 [a]Compare Exodus 12:49

LORD, for their unintended sin. 26It shall be forgiven the whole congregation of the children of Israel and the stranger who dwells among them, because all the people *did it* unintentionally.

27'And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering. 28So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the LORD, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. 29You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, *for* him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them.

Law Concerning Presumptuous Sin

30'But the person who does *anything* presumptuously, *whether he is* native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people. 31Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt *shall be* upon him.'"

Penalty for Violating the Sabbath

32Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. 34They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him.

35Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36So, as the LORD commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died.

Tassels on Garments

37Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 38"Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. 39And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you *may* not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, 40and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. 41I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD your God."

Rebellion Against Moses and Aaron

16 Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men;* 2and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. 3They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "*You take* too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation *is* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

4So when Moses heard *it,* he fell on his face; 5and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who *is* His and *who is* holy, and will cause *him* to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him. 6Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your company; 7put fire in them and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow, and it shall be *that* the man whom the LORD chooses *is* the holy one. *You take* too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!"

8Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: 9*Is it* a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; 10and that He has brought you near *to Himself,* you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? 11Therefore you and all your company *are* gathered together against the LORD. And what *is* Aaron that you complain against him?"

12And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up! 13*Is it* a small thing

that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us? 14Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!"

15Then Moses was very angry, and said to the LORD, "Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them."

16And Moses said to Korah, "Tomorrow, you and all your company be present before the LORD—you and they, as well as Aaron. 17Let each take his censer and put incense in it, and each of you bring his censer before the LORD, two hundred and fifty censers; both you and Aaron, each *with* his censer." 18So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and stood at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with Moses and Aaron. 19And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

20And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 21"Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

22Then they fell on their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation?"

23So the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24"Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'"

25Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins." 27So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children.

28And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for *I have* not *done them* of my own will. 29If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, *then* the LORD has not sent me. 30But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD."

31Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, 32and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all *their* goods. 33So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. 34Then all Israel who *were* around them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up *also!*"

35And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.

36Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 37"Tell Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, to pick up the censers out of the blaze, for they are holy, and scatter the fire some distance away. 38The censers of these men who sinned against their own souls, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar. Because they presented them before the LORD, therefore they are holy; and they shall be a sign to the children of Israel." 39So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned up had presented, and they were hammered out as a covering on the altar, 40*to be* a memorial to the children of Israel that no outsider, who *is* not a descendant of Aaron, should come near to offer incense before the LORD, that he might not become like Korah and his companions, just as the LORD had said to him through Moses.

Complaints of the People

41On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD." 42Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of

meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting.

44And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45"Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

And they fell on their faces.

46So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense *on it,* and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun." 47Then Aaron took *it* as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. 48And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. 49Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. 50So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped.

The Budding of Aaron's Rod

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and get from them a rod from each father's house, all their leaders according to their fathers' houses—twelve rods. Write each man's name on his rod. 3And you shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. For there shall be one rod for the head of *each* father's house. 4Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. 5And it shall be *that* the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you."

6So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron *was* among their rods. 7And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

8Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. 9Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.

10And the LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die." 11Thus did Moses; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

12So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Surely we die, we perish, we all perish! 13Whoever even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD must die. Shall we all utterly die?"

Duties of Priests and Levites

18 Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the iniquity *related to* the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity *associated with* your priesthood. 2Also bring with you your brethren of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you while you and your sons *are* with you before the tabernacle of witness. 3They shall attend to your needs and all the needs of the tabernacle; but they shall not come near the articles of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they die—they and you also. 4They shall be joined with you and attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, for all the work of the tabernacle; but an outsider shall not come near you. 5And you shall attend to the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar, that there *may* be no more wrath on the children of Israel. 6Behold, I Myself have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; *they are* a gift to you, given by the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 7Therefore you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and behind the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood *to you* as a gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

Offerings for Support of the Priests

8And the LORD spoke to Aaron: "Here, I Myself have also given you charge of

My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever. 9This shall be yours of the most holy things *reserved* from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, *shall be* most holy for you and your sons. 10In a most holy *place* you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

11"This also *is* yours: the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance forever. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

12"All the best of the oil, all the best of the new wine and the grain, their firstfruits which they offer to the LORD, I have given them to you. 13Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

14"Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours.

15"Everything that first opens the womb of all flesh, which they bring to the LORD, whether man or beast, shall be yours; nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. 16And those redeemed of the devoted things you shall redeem when one month old, according to your valuation, for five shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which *is* twenty gerahs. 17But the firstborn of a cow, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they *are* holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat *as* an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 18And their flesh shall be yours, just as the wave breast and the right thigh are yours.

19"All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it *is* a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you."

20Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I *am* your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.

Tithes for Support of the Levites

21"Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 22Hereafter the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. 23But the Levites shall perform the work of the tabernacle of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; *it shall be* a statute forever, throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 24For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up *as* a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, 'Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.'"

The Tithe of the Levites

25Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 26"Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe. 27And your heave offering shall be reckoned to you as though *it were* the grain of the threshing floor and as the fullness of the winepress. 28Thus you shall also offer a heave offering to the LORD from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give the LORD's heave offering from it to Aaron the priest. 29Of all your gifts you shall offer up every heave offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the consecrated part of them.' 30Therefore you shall say to them: 'When you have lifted up the best of it, then *the rest* shall be accounted to the Levites as the produce of the threshing floor and as the produce of the winepress. 31You may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it *is* your reward for your work in the tabernacle of meeting. 32And you shall bear no sin because of it, when you have lifted up the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy gifts of the children of Israel, lest you die.'"

Laws of Purification

19 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2"This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there *is* no defect *and* on which a yoke has never come. 3You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him; 4and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. 5Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. 6And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast *them* into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. 7Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. 8And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. 9Then a man *who is* clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store *them* outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification;[a] it *is* for purifying from sin. 10And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them.

11'He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. 12He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; *then* he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. 13Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness *is* still on him.

14'This *is* the law when a man dies in a tent: All who come into the tent and all who *are* in the tent shall be unclean seven days; 15and every open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, *is* unclean. 16Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

17'And for an unclean *person* they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel. 18A clean person shall take hyssop and dip *it* in the water, sprinkle *it* on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave. 19The clean *person* shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean.

20'But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he *is* unclean. 21It shall be a perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. 22Whatever the unclean *person* touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches *it* shall be unclean until evening.'"

Moses' Error at Kadesh

20 Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there.

2Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. 3And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! 4Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? 5And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It *is* not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor *is* there any water to drink." 6So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to

19:9 [a]Literally *impurity*

the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

7Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8"Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." 9So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

10And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

12Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

13This *was* the water of Meribah,[a] because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

Passage Through Edom Refused

14Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. "Thus says your brother Israel: 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us, 15how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. 16When we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. 17Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.'"

18Then Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my *land*, lest I come out against you with the sword."

19So the children of Israel said to him, "We will go by the Highway, and if I or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing *more*."

20Then he said, "You shall not pass through." So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand. 21Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.

Death of Aaron

22Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. 23And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: 24"Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. 25Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; 26and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered *to his people* and die there." 27So Moses did just as the LORD commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. 28Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. 29Now when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

Canaanites Defeated at Hormah

21 The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim. Then he fought against Israel and took *some* of them prisoners. 2So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." 3And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah.[a]

The Bronze Serpent

4Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people

20:13 [a]Literally *Contention* **21:3** [a]Literally *Utter Destruction*

became very discouraged on the way. 5And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

7Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent,* and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." 9So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

Then Israel sang this song: "Spring up, O well! All of you sing to it—"
NUMBERS 21:17

From Mount Hor to Moab

10Now the children of Israel moved on and camped in Oboth. 11And they journeyed from Oboth and camped at Ije Abarim, in the wilderness which *is* east of Moab, toward the sunrise. 12From there they moved and camped in the Valley of Zered. 13From there they moved and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which *is* in the wilderness that extends from the border of the Amorites; for the Arnon *is* the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. 14Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD:

"Waheb in Suphah,[a]
The brooks of the Arnon,
15 And the slope of the brooks
That reaches to the dwelling of Ar,
And lies on the border of Moab."

16From there *they went* to Beer, which *is* the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." 17Then Israel sang this song:

"Spring up, O well!
All of you sing to it—
18 The well the leaders sank,
Dug by the nation's nobles,
By the lawgiver, with their staves."

And from the wilderness *they went* to Mattanah, 19from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, 20and from Bamoth, *in* the valley that *is* in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah which looks down on the wasteland.[a]

King Sihon Defeated

21Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, 22"Let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into fields or vineyards; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory." 23But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and he came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. 24Then Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the people of Ammon; for the border of the people of Ammon *was* fortified. 25So Israel took all these cities, and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all its villages. 26For Heshbon *was* the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and had taken all his land from his hand as far as the Arnon. 27Therefore those who speak in proverbs say:

"Come to Heshbon, let it be built;
Let the city of Sihon be repaired.

28 "For fire went out from Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon;
It consumed Ar of Moab,
The lords of the heights of the Arnon.
29 Woe to you, Moab!
You have perished, O people of
Chemosh!
He has given his sons as fugitives,
And his daughters into captivity,
To Sihon king of the Amorites.

21:14 [a]Ancient unknown places; Vulgate reads *What He did in the Red Sea.* **21:20** [a]Hebrew *Jeshimon*

30 "But we have shot at them;
Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon.
Then we laid waste as far as Nophah,
Which *reaches* to Medeba."

31Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. 32Then Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took its villages and drove out the Amorites who *were* there.

King Og Defeated

33And they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. So Og king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. 34Then the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon." 35So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land.

Balak Sends for Balaam

22 Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan *across from* Jericho.

2Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they *were* many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. 4So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time. 5Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which *is* near the River[a] in the land of the sons of his people,[b] to call him, saying: "Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they *are* too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless *is* blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

7So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak. 8And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

9Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who *are* these men with you?"

10So Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, *saying,* 11'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come now, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to overpower them and drive them out.'"

12And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they *are* blessed."

13So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to give me permission to go with you."

14And the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

15Then Balak again sent princes, more numerous and more honorable than they. 16And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: 'Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; 17for I will certainly honor you greatly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Therefore please come, curse this people for me.'"

18Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. 19Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me."

20And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise *and* go with them; but only the word which I speak to you—that you shall do." 21So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

Balaam, the Donkey, and the Angel

22Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants *were* with him. 23Now the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing

22:5 [a]That is, the Euphrates [b]Or *the people of Amau*

in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. 24Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, *with* a wall on this side and a wall on that side. 25And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again. 26Then the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there *was* no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff.

28Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

29And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!"

30So the donkey said to Balaam, "*Am* I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since *I became* yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?"

And he said, "No."

31Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. 32And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because *your* way is perverse before Me. 33The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live."

34And Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases You, I will turn back."

35Then the Angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but only the word that I speak to you, that you shall speak." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

36Now when Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which *is* on the border at the Arnon, the boundary of the territory. 37Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not earnestly send to you, calling for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?"

38And Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you! Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." 39So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kirjath Huzoth. 40Then Balak offered oxen and sheep, and he sent *some* to Balaam and to the princes who *were* with him.

Balaam's First Prophecy

41So it was, the next day, that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the high places of Baal, that from there he might observe the extent of the people.

23 Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars for me here, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams."

2And Balak did just as Balaam had spoken, and Balak and Balaam offered a bull and a ram on *each* altar. 3Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stand by your burnt offering, and I will go; perhaps the LORD will come to meet me, and whatever He shows me I will tell you." So he went to a desolate height. 4And God met Balaam, and he said to Him, "I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered on *each* altar a bull and a ram."

5Then the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, "Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak." 6So he returned to him, and there he was, standing by his burnt offering, he and all the princes of Moab.

7And he took up his oracle and said:

"Balak the king of Moab has brought
me from Aram,
From the mountains of the east.
'Come, curse Jacob for me,
And come, denounce Israel!'

8 "How shall I curse whom God has not
cursed?
And how shall I denounce *whom* the
LORD has not denounced?
9 For from the top of the rocks I see him,

And from the hills I behold him;
There! A people dwelling alone,
Not reckoning itself among the nations.

10 "Who can count the dust[a] of Jacob,
Or number one-fourth of Israel?
Let me die the death of the righteous,
And let my end be like his!"

11 Then Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and look, you have blessed *them* bountifully!"

12 So he answered and said, "Must I not take heed to speak what the LORD has put in my mouth?"

Balaam's Second Prophecy

13 Then Balak said to him, "Please come with me to another place from which you may see them; you shall see only the outer part of them, and shall not see them all; curse them for me from there." 14 So he brought him to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on *each* altar.

15 And he said to Balak, "Stand here by your burnt offering while I meet[a] *the* LORD over there."

16 Then the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, "Go back to Balak, and thus you shall speak." 17 So he came to him, and there he was, standing by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab were with him. And Balak said to him, "What has the LORD spoken?"

18 Then he took up his oracle and said:

"Rise up, Balak, and hear!
Listen to me, son of Zippor!

19 "God *is* not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent.
Has He said, and will He not do?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?
20 Behold, I have received *a command* to bless;
He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

21 "He has not observed iniquity in Jacob,
Nor has He seen wickedness in Israel.
The LORD his God *is* with him,
And the shout of a King *is* among them.
22 God brings them out of Egypt;
He has strength like a wild ox.

23 "For *there is* no sorcery against Jacob,
Nor any divination against Israel.
It now must be said of Jacob
And of Israel, 'Oh, what God has done!'
24 Look, a people rises like a lioness,
And lifts itself up like a lion;
It shall not lie down until it devours the prey,
And drinks the blood of the slain."

25 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all!"

26 So Balaam answered and said to Balak, "Did I not tell you, saying, 'All that the LORD speaks, that I must do'?"

Balaam's Third Prophecy

27 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Please come, I will take you to another place; perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me from there." 28 So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, that overlooks the wasteland.[a] 29 Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build for me here seven altars, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams." 30 And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bull and a ram on *every* altar.

24 Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times, to seek to use sorcery, but he set his face toward the wilderness. 2 And Balaam raised his eyes, and saw Israel encamped according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

3 Then he took up his oracle and said:

"The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor,
The utterance of the man whose eyes are opened,
4 The utterance of him who hears the words of God,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Who falls down, with eyes wide open:

5 "How lovely are your tents, O Jacob!

23:10 [a]Or *dust cloud* **23:15** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Syriac reads *call;* Septuagint reads *go and ask God.*
23:28 [a]Hebrew *Jeshimon*

Your dwellings, O Israel!
6 Like valleys that stretch out,
Like gardens by the riverside,
Like aloes planted by the LORD,
Like cedars beside the waters.
7 He shall pour water from his buckets,
And his seed *shall be* in many waters.

"His king shall be higher than Agag,
And his kingdom shall be exalted.

8 "God brings him out of Egypt;
He has strength like a wild ox;
He shall consume the nations, his enemies;
He shall break their bones
And pierce *them* with his arrows.
9 'He bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?'[a]

"Blessed *is* he who blesses you,
And cursed *is* he who curses you."

10 Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed *them* these three times! 11 Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the LORD has kept you back from honor."

12 So Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, 13 'If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD, to do good or bad of my own will. What the LORD says, that I must speak'? 14 And now, indeed, I am going to my people. Come, I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the latter days."

Balaam's Fourth Prophecy

15 So he took up his oracle and said:

"The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor,
And the utterance of the man whose eyes are opened;
16 The utterance of him who hears the words of God,
And has the knowledge of the Most High,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Who falls down, with eyes wide open:
17 "I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not near;
A Star shall come out of Jacob;
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,
And batter the brow of Moab,
And destroy all the sons of tumult.[a]

18 "And Edom shall be a possession;
Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession,
While Israel does valiantly.
19 Out of Jacob One shall have dominion,
And destroy the remains of the city."

20 Then he looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said:

"Amalek *was* first among the nations,
But *shall be* last until he perishes."
21 Then he looked on the Kenites, and he took up his oracle and said:

"Firm is your dwelling place,
And your nest is set in the rock;
22 Nevertheless Kain shall be burned.
How long until Asshur carries you away captive?"

23 Then he took up his oracle and said:

"Alas! Who shall live when God does this?
24 But ships *shall come* from the coasts of Cyprus,[a]
And they shall afflict Asshur and afflict Eber,
And so shall *Amalek*,[b] until he perishes."

25 So Balaam rose and departed and returned to his place; Balak also went his way.

Israel's Harlotry in Moab

25 Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove,[a] and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

24:9 [a]Genesis 49:9 **24:17** [a]Hebrew *Sheth* (compare Jeremiah 48:45)
24:24 [a]Hebrew *Kittim* [b]Literally *he* or *that one* **25:1** [a]Hebrew *Shittim*

[4]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel."

[5]So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."

[6]And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. [7]Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it,* he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; [8]and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. [9]And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

[10]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: [11]"Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. [12]Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; [13]and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.'"

[14]Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, *was* Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's house among the Simeonites. [15]And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed *was* Cozbi the daughter of Zur; he *was* head of the people of a father's house in Midian.

[16]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: [17]"Harass the Midianites, and attack them; [18]for they harassed you with their schemes by which they seduced you in the matter of Peor and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a leader of Midian, their sister, who was killed in the day of the plague because of Peor."

The Second Census of Israel

26 And it came to pass, after the plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: [2]"Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel." [3]So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho, saying: [4]"*Take a census of the people* from twenty years old and above, just as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt."

[5]Reuben *was* the firstborn of Israel. The children of Reuben *were: of* Hanoch, the family of the Hanochites; *of* Pallu, the family of the Palluites; [6]*of* Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; *of* Carmi, the family of the Carmites. [7]These *are* the families of the Reubenites: those who were numbered of them were forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty. [8]And the son of Pallu *was* Eliab. [9]The sons of Eliab *were* Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These *are* the Dathan and Abiram, representatives of the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD; [10]and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a sign. [11]Nevertheless the children of Korah did not die.



12The sons of Simeon according to
their families *were: of* Nemuel,[a] the fam-
ily of the Nemuelites; *of* Jamin, the family
of the Jaminites; *of* Jachin,[b] the family of
the Jachinites; 13*of* Zerah,[a] the family of the
Zarhites; *of* Shaul, the family of the Shaulites.
14These *are* the families of the Simeonites:
twenty-two thousand two hundred.

15The sons of Gad according to their
families *were: of* Zephon,[a] the family of the
Zephonites; *of* Haggi, the family of the
Haggites; *of* Shuni, the family of the Shunites;
16*of* Ozni,[a] the family of the Oznites; *of* Eri,
the family of the Erites; 17*of* Arod,[a] the fam-
ily of the Arodites; *of* Areli, the family of the
Arelites. 18These *are* the families of the sons
of Gad according to those who were num-
bered of them: forty thousand five hundred.

19The sons of Judah *were* Er and Onan;
and Er and Onan died in the land of
Canaan. 20And the sons of Judah accord-
ing to their families were: *of* Shelah, the
family of the Shelanites; *of* Perez, the fam-
ily of the Parzites; *of* Zerah, the family of
the Zarhites. 21And the sons of Perez were:
of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites;
of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites.
22These *are* the families of Judah accord-
ing to those who were numbered of them:
seventy-six thousand five hundred.

23The sons of Issachar according to
their families *were: of* Tola, the family of the
Tolaites; of Puah,[a] the family of the Punites;[b]
24of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of
Shimron, the family of the Shimronites.
25These *are* the families of Issachar accord-
ing to those who were numbered of them:
sixty-four thousand three hundred.

26The sons of Zebulun according to their
families *were:* of Sered, the family of the
Sardites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites;
of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites.
27These *are* the families of the Zebulunites
according to those who were numbered of
them: sixty thousand five hundred.

28The sons of Joseph according to
their families, by Manasseh and Ephraim,
were: 29The sons of Manasseh: of Machir,
the family of the Machirites; and Machir
begot Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the
Gileadites. 30These *are* the sons of Gilead:
of Jeezer,[a] the family of the Jeezerites;
of Helek, the family of the Helekites;
31*of* Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; *of*
Shechem, the family of the Shechemites;
32*of* Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites;
of Hepher, the family of the Hepherites.
33Now Zelophehad the son of Hepher had
no sons, but daughters; and the names of
the daughters of Zelophehad *were* Mahlah,
Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 34These
are the families of Manasseh; and those
who were numbered of them *were* fifty-two
thousand seven hundred.

35These *are* the sons of Ephraim accord-
ing to their families: of Shuthelah, the
family of the Shuthalhites; of Becher,[a] the
family of the Bachrites; of Tahan, the fam-
ily of the Tahanites. 36And these *are* the
sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of
the Eranites. 37These *are* the families of the
sons of Ephraim according to those who
were numbered of them: thirty-two thou-
sand five hundred.

These *are* the sons of Joseph according
to their families.

38The sons of Benjamin according to
their families were: of Bela, the family of
the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the
Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the family of the
Ahiramites; 39of Shupham,[a] the family of
the Shuphamites; of Hupham,[b] the family
of the Huphamites. 40And the sons of Bela
were Ard[a] and Naaman: *of Ard,* the family
of the Ardites; of Naaman, the family of the
Naamites. 41These *are* the sons of Benjamin
according to their families; and those who
were numbered of them *were* forty-five
thousand six hundred.

42These *are* the sons of Dan according
to their families: of Shuham,[a] the family of
the Shuhamites. These *are* the families of
Dan according to their families. 43All the
families of the Shuhamites, according to
those who were numbered of them, *were*
sixty-four thousand four hundred.

44The sons of Asher according to their
families *were:* of Jimna, the family of the

26:12 [a]Spelled *Jemuel* in Genesis 46:10 and Exodus 6:15 [b]Called *Jarib* in 1 Chronicles 4:24 **26:13** [a]Called *Zohar* in Genesis 46:10 **26:15** [a]Called *Ziphion* in Genesis 46:16 **26:16** [a]Called *Ezbon* in Genesis 46:16 **26:17** [a]Spelled *Arodi* in Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, and Genesis 46:16 **26:23** [a]Hebrew *Puvah* (compare Genesis 46:13 and 1 Chronicles 7:1); Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Puah.* [b]Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Puaites.* **26:30** [a]Called *Abiezer* in Joshua 17:2 **26:35** [a]Called *Bered* in 1 Chronicles 7:20 **26:39** [a]Masoretic Text reads *Shephupham,* spelled *Shephuphan* in 1 Chronicles 8:5. [b]Called *Huppim* in Genesis 46:21 **26:40** [a]Called *Addar* in 1 Chronicles 8:3 **26:42** [a]Called *Hushim* in Genesis 46:23

Jimnites; of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites; of Beriah, the family of the Beriites. 45Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. 46And the name of the daughter of Asher *was* Serah. 47These *are* the families of the sons of Asher according to those who were numbered of them: fifty-three thousand four hundred.

48The sons of Naphtali according to their families *were:* of Jahzeel,[a] the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; 49of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. 50These *are* the families of Naphtali according to their families; and those who were numbered of them *were* forty-five thousand four hundred.

51These *are* those who were numbered of the children of Israel: six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty.

52Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 53"To these the land shall be divided as an inheritance, according to the number of names. 54To a large *tribe* you shall give a larger inheritance, and to a small *tribe* you shall give a smaller inheritance. Each shall be given its inheritance according to those who were numbered of them. 55But the land shall be divided by lot; they shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. 56According to the lot their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller."

57And these *are* those who were numbered of the Levites according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58These *are* the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, and the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begot Amram. 59The name of Amram's wife *was* Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam. 60To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered profane fire before the LORD.

62Now those who were numbered of them were twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and above; for they were not numbered among the other children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the children of Israel.

63These *are* those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho. 64But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. 65For the LORD had said of them, "They shall surely die in the wilderness." So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

Inheritance Laws

27 Then came the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these *were* the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 2And they stood before Moses, before Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and all the congregation, *by* the doorway of the tabernacle of meeting, saying: 3"Our father died in the wilderness; but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the LORD, in company with Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons. 4Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father's brothers."

5So Moses brought their case before the LORD.

6And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 7"The daughters of Zelophehad speak *what is* right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father's brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them. 8And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. 9If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. 10If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. 11And if his father has no brothers, then you shall

26:48 [a]Spelled *Jahziel* in 1 Chronicles 7:13

give his inheritance to the relative closest to him in his family, and he shall possess it.'" And it shall be to the children of Israel a statute of judgment, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

Joshua the Next Leader of Israel

12 Now the LORD said to Moses: "Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. 13 And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. 14 For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes." (These *are* the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.)

15 Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: 16 "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17 who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd."

18 And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom *is* the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 19 set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. 20 And you shall give *some* of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. 21 He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the LORD for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation."

22 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23 And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

Daily Offerings

28 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time.'

3 "And you shall say to them, 'This *is* the offering made by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs in their first year without blemish, day by day, as a regular burnt offering. 4 The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, the other lamb you shall offer in the evening, 5 and one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil. 6 *It is* a regular burnt offering which was ordained at Mount Sinai for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 7 And its drink offering *shall be* one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in a holy *place* you shall pour out the drink to the LORD as an offering. 8 The other lamb you shall offer in the evening; as the morning grain offering and its drink offering, you shall offer *it* as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

Sabbath Offerings

9 'And on the Sabbath day two lambs in their first year, without blemish, and two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its drink offering—10 *this is* the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering.

Monthly Offerings

11 'At the beginnings of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish; 12 three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; 13 and one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour, mixed with oil, as a grain offering for each lamb, as a burnt offering of sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 14 Their drink offering shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth of a hin for a lamb; this *is* the burnt offering for each month throughout the months of the year. 15 Also one kid of the goats as a sin offering to the LORD shall be offered, besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

Offerings at Passover

16 ‘On the fourteenth day of the first
month *is* the Passover of the Lord. 17 And on
the fifteenth day of this month *is* the feast;
unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven
days. 18 On the first day *you shall have* a holy
convocation. You shall do no customary
work. 19 And you shall present an offering
made by fire as a burnt offering to the Lord:
two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs
in their first year. Be sure they are without
blemish. 20 Their grain offering shall be of
fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of*
an ephah you shall offer for a bull, and two-
tenths for a ram; 21 you shall offer one-tenth
of an ephah for each of the seven lambs;
22 also one goat *as* a sin offering, to make
atonement for you. 23 You shall offer these
besides the burnt offering of the morning,
which *is* for a regular burnt offering. 24 In
this manner you shall offer the food of the
offering made by fire daily for seven days,
as a sweet aroma to the Lord; it shall be
offered besides the regular burnt offering
and its drink offering. 25 And on the seventh
day you shall have a holy convocation. You
shall do no customary work.

Offerings at the Feast of Weeks

26 ‘Also on the day of the firstfruits,
when you bring a new grain offering to the
Lord at your *Feast of* Weeks, you shall have
a holy convocation. You shall do no cus-
tomary work. 27 You shall present a burnt
offering as a sweet aroma to the Lord: two
young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in
their first year, 28 with their grain offering
of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of*
an ephah for each bull, two-tenths for the
one ram, 29 and one-tenth for each of the
seven lambs; 30 *also* one kid of the goats, to
make atonement for you. 31 Be sure they are
without blemish. You shall present *them*
with their drink offerings, besides the reg-
ular burnt offering with its grain offering.

Offerings at the Feast of Trumpets

29 ‘And in the seventh month, on the
first *day* of the month, you shall
have a holy convocation. You shall do no
customary work. For you it is a day of blow-
ing the trumpets. 2 You shall offer a burnt
offering as a sweet aroma to the Lord: one
young bull, one ram, *and* seven lambs in
their first year, without blemish. 3 Their
grain offering *shall be* fine flour mixed with
oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for the bull,
two-tenths for the ram, 4 and one-tenth for
each of the seven lambs; 5 also one kid of
the goats *as* a sin offering, to make atone-
ment for you; 6 besides the burnt offering
with its grain offering for the New Moon,
the regular burnt offering with its grain
offering, and their drink offerings, accord-
ing to their ordinance, as a sweet aroma,
an offering made by fire to the Lord.

Offerings on the Day of Atonement

7 ‘On the tenth *day* of this seventh
month you shall have a holy convocation.
You shall afflict your souls; you shall not
do any work. 8 You shall present a burnt
offering to the Lord *as* a sweet aroma: one
young bull, one ram, *and* seven lambs in
their first year. Be sure they are without
blemish. 9 Their grain offering *shall be of*
fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an*
ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the one
ram, 10 and one-tenth for each of the seven
lambs; 11 also one kid of the goats *as* a sin
offering, besides the sin offering for atone-
ment, the regular burnt offering with its
grain offering, and their drink offerings.

Offerings at the Feast of Tabernacles

12 ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh
month you shall have a holy convocation.
You shall do no customary work, and you
shall keep a feast to the Lord seven days.
13 You shall present a burnt offering, an
offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to
the Lord: thirteen young bulls, two rams, *and*
fourteen lambs in their first year. They shall
be without blemish. 14 Their grain offering
shall be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-
tenths *of an ephah* for each of the thirteen
bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams,
15 and one-tenth for each of the fourteen
lambs; 16 also one kid of the goats *as* a sin
offering, besides the regular burnt offering,
its grain offering, and its drink offering.

17 ‘On the second day *present* twelve
young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in
their first year without blemish, 18 and their
grain offering and their drink offerings for

the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [19]also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

[20]'On the third day *present* eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, [21]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [22]also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[23]'On the fourth day *present* ten bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year, without blemish, [24]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [25]also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[26]'On the fifth day *present* nine bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, [27]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [28]also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[29]'On the sixth day *present* eight bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, [30]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [31]also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[32]'On the seventh day *present* seven bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, [33]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [34]also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[35]'On the eighth day you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work. [36]You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year without blemish, [37]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [38]also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[39]'These you shall present to the LORD at your appointed feasts (besides your vowed offerings and your freewill offerings) as your burnt offerings and your grain offerings, as your drink offerings and your peace offerings.'"

[40]So Moses told the children of Israel everything, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Law Concerning Vows

30 Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded: [2]If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

[3]"Or if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds *herself* by some agreement while in her father's house in her youth, [4]and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. [5]But if her father overrules her on the day that he hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will release her, because her father overruled her.

[6]"If indeed she takes a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, [7]and her husband hears *it,* and makes no response to her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself shall stand. [8]But if her husband overrules her on the day that he hears *it,* he shall make void her vow which she took and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound herself, and the LORD will release her.

9"Also any vow of a widow or a divorced
woman, by which she has bound herself,
shall stand against her.
10"If she vowed in her husband's house,
or bound herself by an agreement with
an oath, 11and her husband heard *it,* and
made no response to her *and* did not over-
rule her, then all her vows shall stand, and
every agreement by which she bound her-
self shall stand. 12But if her husband truly
made them void on the day he heard *them,*
then whatever proceeded from her lips
concerning her vows or concerning the
agreement binding her, it shall not stand;
her husband has made them void, and the
LORD will release her. 13Every vow and every
binding oath to afflict her soul, her hus-
band may confirm it, or her husband may
make it void. 14Now if her husband makes
no response whatever to her from day to
day, then he confirms all her vows or all
the agreements that bind her; he confirms
them, because he made no response to her
on the day that he heard *them.* 15But if he
does make them void after he has heard
them, then he shall bear her guilt."
16These *are* the statutes which the LORD
commanded Moses, between a man and his
wife, and between a father and his daugh-
ter in her youth in her father's house.

Vengeance on the Midianites

31 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
2"Take vengeance on the Midianites
for the children of Israel. Afterward you
shall be gathered to your people."
3So Moses spoke to the people, say-
ing, "Arm some of yourselves for war, and
let them go against the Midianites to take
vengeance for the LORD on Midian. 4A
thousand from each tribe of all the tribes
of Israel you shall send to the war."
5So there were recruited from the divi-
sions of Israel one thousand from *each*
tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.
6Then Moses sent them to the war, one
thousand from *each* tribe; he sent them to
the war with Phinehas the son of Eleazar
the priest, with the holy articles and the
signal trumpets in his hand. 7And they
warred against the Midianites, just as
the LORD commanded Moses, and they
killed all the males. 8They killed the kings
of Midian with *the rest of* those who were
killed—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba,
the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of
Beor they also killed with the sword.
9And the children of Israel took the
women of Midian captive, with their little
ones, and took as spoil all their cattle, all
their flocks, and all their goods. 10They
also burned with fire all the cities where
they dwelt, and all their forts. 11And they
took all the spoil and all the booty—of
man and beast.

Return from the War

12Then they brought the captives, the
booty, and the spoil to Moses, to Eleazar
the priest, and to the congregation of the
children of Israel, to the camp in the plains
of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho.
13And Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the
leaders of the congregation, went to meet
them outside the camp. 14But Moses was
angry with the officers of the army, *with* the
captains over thousands and captains over
hundreds, who had come from the battle.
15And Moses said to them: "Have you kept
all the women alive? 16Look, these *women*
caused the children of Israel, through the
counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the
LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a
plague among the congregation of the LORD.
17Now therefore, kill every male among the
little ones, and kill every woman who has
known a man intimately. 18But keep alive
for yourselves all the young girls who have
not known a man intimately. 19And as for
you, remain outside the camp seven days;
whoever has killed any person, and whoever
has touched any slain, purify yourselves and
your captives on the third day and on the
seventh day. 20Purify every garment, every-
thing made of leather, everything woven of
goats' *hair,* and everything made of wood."
21Then Eleazar the priest said to the
men of war who had gone to the battle,
"This *is* the ordinance of the law which the
LORD commanded Moses: 22Only the gold,
the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and
the lead, 23everything that can endure fire,
you shall put through the fire, and it shall
be clean; and it shall be purified with the
water of purification. But all that cannot
endure fire you shall put through water.

24And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day and be clean, and afterward you may come into the camp."

Division of the Plunder

25Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 26"Count up the plunder that was taken—of man and beast—you and Eleazar the priest and the chief fathers of the congregation; 27and divide the plunder into two parts, between those who took part in the war, who went out to battle, and all the congregation. 28And levy a tribute for the LORD on the men of war who went out to battle: one of every five hundred of the persons, the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep; 29take *it* from their half, and give *it* to Eleazar the priest as a heave offering to the LORD. 30And from the children of Israel's half you shall take one of every fifty, drawn from the persons, the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep, from all the livestock, and give them to the Levites who keep charge of the tabernacle of the LORD." 31So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32The booty remaining from the plunder, which the men of war had taken, was six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, 33seventy-two thousand cattle, 34sixty-one thousand donkeys, 35and thirty-two thousand persons in all, of women who had not known a man intimately. 36And the half, the portion for those who had gone out to war, was in number three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep; 37and the LORD's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and seventy-five. 38The cattle *were* thirty-six thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* seventy-two. 39The donkeys *were* thirty thousand five hundred, of which the LORD's tribute *was* sixty-one. 40The persons *were* sixteen thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* thirty-two persons. 41So Moses gave the tribute *which was* the LORD's heave offering to Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.

42And from the children of Israel's half, which Moses separated from the men who fought— 43now the half belonging to the congregation was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, 44thirty-six thousand cattle, 45thirty thousand five hundred donkeys, 46and sixteen thousand persons— 47and from the children of Israel's half Moses took one of every fifty, drawn from man and beast, and gave them to the Levites, who kept charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

48Then the officers who *were* over thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, came near to Moses; 49and they said to Moses, "Your servants have taken a count of the men of war who *are* under our command, and not a man of us is missing. 50Therefore we have brought an offering for the LORD, what every man found of ornaments of gold: armlets and bracelets and signet rings and earrings and necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD." 51So Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from them, all the fashioned ornaments. 52And all the gold of the offering that they offered to the LORD, from the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. 53(The men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.) 54And Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of meeting as a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

The Tribes Settling East of the Jordan

32 Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region *was* a place for livestock, 2the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, 3"Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, 4the country which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." 5Therefore they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan."

6And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: "Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? 7Now why will you discourage the heart of the

children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them? 8Thus your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. 9For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them. 10So the LORD's anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, 11'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, 12except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.' 13So the LORD's anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone. 14And look! You have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel. 15For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people."

16Then they came near to him and said: "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, 17but we ourselves will be armed, ready *to go* before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; and our little ones will dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. 18We will not return to our homes until every one of the children of Israel has received his inheritance. 19For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this eastern side of the Jordan."

20Then Moses said to them: "If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the LORD for the war, 21and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, 22and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the LORD and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. 23But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out. 24Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep, and do what has proceeded out of your mouth."

25And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying: "Your servants will do as my lord commands. 26Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock will be there in the cities of Gilead; 27but your servants will cross over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, just as my lord says."

28So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. 29And Moses said to them: "If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. 30But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan."

31Then the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying: "As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do. 32We will cross over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, but the possession of our inheritance *shall remain* with us on this side of the Jordan."

33So Moses gave to the children of Gad, to the children of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its cities within the borders, the cities of the surrounding country. 34And the children of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, 35Atroth and Shophan and Jazer and Jogbehah, 36Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran, fortified cities, and folds for sheep. 37And the children of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kirjathaim, 38Nebo and Baal Meon (*their* names being changed) and Shibmah; and they gave *other* names to the cities which they built.

39And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who *were* in it. 40So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelt in it. 41Also Jair

the son of Manasseh went and took its small towns, and called them Havoth Jair.[a] 42Then Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and he called it Nobah, after his own name.

Israel's Journey from Egypt Reviewed

33 These *are* the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the LORD. And these *are* their journeys according to their starting points:

3They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4For the Egyptians were burying all *their* firstborn, whom the LORD had killed among them. Also on their gods the LORD had executed judgments.

5Then the children of Israel moved from Rameses and camped at Succoth. 6They departed from Succoth and camped at Etham, which *is* on the edge of the wilderness. 7They moved from Etham and turned back to Pi Hahiroth, which *is* east of Baal Zephon; and they camped near Migdol. 8They departed from before Hahiroth[a] and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, went three days' journey in the Wilderness of Etham, and camped at Marah. 9They moved from Marah and came to Elim. At Elim *were* twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there.

10They moved from Elim and camped by the Red Sea. 11They moved from the Red Sea and camped in the Wilderness of Sin. 12They journeyed from the Wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah. 13They departed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. 14They moved from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.

15They departed from Rephidim and camped in the Wilderness of Sinai. 16They moved from the Wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah. 17They departed from Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth. 18They departed from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah. 19They departed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez. 20They departed from Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah. 21They moved from Libnah and camped at Rissah. 22They journeyed from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah. 23They went from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher. 24They moved from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah. 25They moved from Haradah and camped at Makheloth. 26They moved from Makheloth and camped at Tahath. 27They departed from Tahath and camped at Terah. 28They moved from Terah and camped at Mithkah. 29They went from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah. 30They departed from Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth. 31They departed from Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan. 32They moved from Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Hagidgad. 33They went from Hor Hagidgad and camped at Jotbathah. 34They moved from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah. 35They departed from Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber. 36They moved from Ezion Geber and camped in the Wilderness of Zin, which *is* Kadesh. 37They moved from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the boundary of the land of Edom.

38Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of the LORD, and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first *day* of the fifth month. 39Aaron *was* one hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.

32:41 [a]Literally *Towns of Jair* **33:8** [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *from Pi Hahiroth* (compare verse 7).



40 Now the king of Arad, the Canaanite,
who dwelt in the South in the land of
Canaan, heard of the coming of the chil-
dren of Israel.
41 So they departed from Mount Hor and
camped at Zalmonah. 42 They departed from
Zalmonah and camped at Punon. 43 They
departed from Punon and camped at Oboth.
44 They departed from Oboth and camped at
Ije Abarim, at the border of Moab. 45 They
departed from Ijim[a] and camped at Dibon
Gad. 46 They moved from Dibon Gad and
camped at Almon Diblathaim. 47 They moved
from Almon Diblathaim and camped in the
mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. 48 They
departed from the mountains of Abarim and
camped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan,
across from Jericho. 49 They camped by the
Jordan, from Beth Jesimoth as far as the Abel
Acacia Grove[a] in the plains of Moab.

Instructions for the Conquest of Canaan

50 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the
plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from*
Jericho, saying, 51 "Speak to the children
of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have
crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan,
52 then you shall drive out all the inhabit-
ants of the land from before you, destroy
all their engraved stones, destroy all their
molded images, and demolish all their high
places; 53 you shall dispossess *the inhabitants*
of the land and dwell in it, for I have given
you the land to possess. 54 And you shall
divide the land by lot as an inheritance
among your families; to the larger you shall
give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller
you shall give a smaller inheritance; there
everyone's *inheritance* shall be whatever
falls to him by lot. You shall inherit accord-
ing to the tribes of your fathers. 55 But if
you do not drive out the inhabitants of the
land from before you, then it shall be that
those whom you let remain *shall be* irritants
in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and
they shall harass you in the land where you
dwell. 56 Moreover it shall be *that* I will do to
you as I thought to do to them.'"

The Appointed Boundaries of Canaan

34 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, say-
ing, 2 "Command the children of
Israel, and say to them: 'When you come
into the land of Canaan, this *is* the land that
shall fall to you as an inheritance—the land
of Canaan to its boundaries. 3 Your south-
ern border shall be from the Wilderness of
Zin along the border of Edom; then your
southern border shall extend eastward to
the end of the Salt Sea; 4 your border shall
turn from the southern side of the Ascent
of Akrabbim, continue to Zin, and be on
the south of Kadesh Barnea; then it shall go
on to Hazar Addar, and continue to Azmon;
5 the border shall turn from Azmon to the
Brook of Egypt, and it shall end at the Sea.
6 'As for the western border, you shall
have the Great Sea for a border; this shall
be your western border.
7 'And this shall be your northern bor-
der: From the Great Sea you shall mark
out your *border* line to Mount Hor; 8 from
Mount Hor you shall mark out *your border*
to the entrance of Hamath; then the direc-
tion of the border shall be toward Zedad;
9 the border shall proceed to Ziphron, and
it shall end at Hazar Enan. This shall be
your northern border.
10 'You shall mark out your eastern bor-
der from Hazar Enan to Shepham; 11 the
border shall go down from Shepham to
Riblah on the east side of Ain; the border
shall go down and reach to the eastern
side of the Sea of Chinnereth; 12 the bor-
der shall go down along the Jordan, and it
shall end at the Salt Sea. This shall be your
land with its surrounding boundaries.'"
13 Then Moses commanded the children
of Israel, saying: "This *is* the land which
you shall inherit by lot, which the LORD has
commanded to give to the nine tribes and
to the half-tribe. 14 For the tribe of the chil-
dren of Reuben according to the house of
their fathers, and the tribe of the children
of Gad according to the house of their
fathers, have received *their inheritance;* and
the half-tribe of Manasseh has received its
inheritance. 15 The two tribes and the half-
tribe have received their inheritance on
this side of the Jordan, *across from* Jericho
eastward, toward the sunrise."

The Leaders Appointed to Divide the Land

16 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
17 "These *are* the names of the men who shall

33:45 [a]Same as *Ije Abarim*, verse 44 **33:49** [a]Hebrew *Abel Shittim*

divide the land among you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. 18And you shall take one leader of every tribe to divide the land for the inheritance. 19These *are* the names of the men: from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 20from the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud; 21from the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon; 22a leader from the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli; 23from the sons of Joseph: a leader from the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod, 24and a leader from the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan; 25a leader from the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach; 26a leader from the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan; 27a leader from the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi; 28and a leader from the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud."

29These *are* the ones the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance among the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

Cities for the Levites

35 And the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *across from* Jericho, saying: 2"Command the children of Israel that they give the Levites cities to dwell in from the inheritance of their possession, and you shall *also* give the Levites common-land around the cities. 3They shall have the cities to dwell in; and their common-land shall be for their cattle, for their herds, and for all their animals. 4The common-land of the cities which you will give the Levites *shall extend* from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits all around. 5And you shall measure outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, on the south side two thousand cubits, on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits. The city *shall be* in the middle. This shall belong to them as common-land for the cities.

6"Now among the cities which you will give to the Levites *you shall appoint* six cities of refuge, to which a manslayer may flee. And to these you shall add forty-two cities. 7So all the cities you will give to the Levites *shall be* forty-eight; these *you shall give* with their common-land. 8And the cities which you will give *shall be* from the possession of the children of Israel; from the larger *tribe* you shall give many, from the smaller you shall give few. Each shall give some of its cities to the Levites, in proportion to the inheritance that each receives."

Cities of Refuge

9Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11then you shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally may flee there. 12They shall be cities of refuge for you from the avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation in judgment. 13And of the cities which you give, you shall have six cities of refuge. 14You shall appoint three cities on this side of the Jordan, and three cities you shall appoint in the land of Canaan, *which* will be cities of refuge. 15These six cities shall be for refuge for the children of Israel, for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them, that anyone who kills a person accidentally may flee there.

16'But if he strikes him with an iron implement, so that he dies, he *is* a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17And if he strikes him with a stone in the hand, by which one could die, and he does die, he *is* a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18Or *if* he strikes him with a wooden hand weapon, by which one could die, and he does die, he *is* a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 19The avenger of blood himself shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. 20If he pushes him out of hatred or, while lying in wait, hurls something at him so that he dies, 21or in enmity he strikes him with his hand so that he dies, the one who struck *him* shall surely be put to death. He *is* a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

22'However, if he pushes him suddenly without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait, 23or uses a stone, by which a man could die, throwing *it* at him

without seeing *him,* so that he dies, while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm, [24]then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood according to these judgments. [25]So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and he shall remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. [26]But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge where he fled, [27]and the avenger of blood finds him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood, [28]because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession.

[29]'And these *things* shall be a statute of judgment to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. [30]Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not *sufficient* testimony against a person for the death *penalty.* [31]Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who *is* guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. [32]And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. [33]So you shall not pollute the land where you *are;* for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. [34]Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.'"

Marriage of Female Heirs

36 Now the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near and spoke before Moses and before the leaders, the chief fathers of the children of Israel. [2]And they said: "The LORD commanded my lord *Moses* to give the land as an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel, and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. [3]Now if they are married to any of the sons of the *other* tribes of the children of Israel, then their inheritance will be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and it will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so it will be taken from the lot of our inheritance. [4]And when the Jubilee of the children of Israel comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers."

[5]Then Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying: "What the tribe of the sons of Joseph speaks is right. [6]This *is* what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, 'Let them marry whom they think best, but they may marry only within the family of their father's tribe.' [7]So the inheritance of the children of Israel shall not change hands from tribe to tribe, for every one of the children of Israel shall keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. [8]And every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall be the wife of one of the family of her father's tribe, so that the children of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers. [9]Thus no inheritance shall change hands from *one* tribe to another, but every tribe of the children of Israel shall keep its own inheritance."

[10]Just as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad; [11]for Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married to the sons of their father's brothers. [12]They were married into the families of the children of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's family.

[13]These *are* the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded the children of Israel by the hand of Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho.

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

Deuteronomy



The Previous Command to Enter Canaan

1 These *are* the words which Moses spoke
to all Israel on this side of the Jordan
in the wilderness, in the plain[a] opposite
Suph,[b] between Paran, Tophel, Laban,
Hazeroth, and Dizahab. 2*It is* eleven days'
journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir
to Kadesh Barnea. 3Now it came to pass in
the fortieth year, in the eleventh month,
on the first *day* of the month, *that* Moses
spoke to the children of Israel according
to all that the LORD had given him as com-
mandments to them, 4after he had killed
Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in
Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who
dwelt at Ashtaroth in[a] Edrei.

5On this side of the Jordan in the land
of Moab, Moses began to explain this
law, saying, 6"The LORD our God spoke to
us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long
enough at this mountain. 7Turn and take
your journey, and go to the mountains of
the Amorites, to all the neighboring *places*
in the plain,[a] in the mountains and in the
lowland, in the South and on the sea-
coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to
Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River
Euphrates. 8See, I have set the land before
you; go in and possess the land which the
LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and
their descendants after them.'

Tribal Leaders Appointed

9"And I spoke to you at that time, say-
ing: 'I alone am not able to bear you. 10The
LORD your God has multiplied you, and
here you *are* today, as the stars of heaven
in multitude. 11May the LORD God of your
fathers make you a thousand times more
numerous than you are, and bless you as
He has promised you! 12How can I alone
bear your problems and your burdens and
your complaints? 13Choose wise, under-
standing, and knowledgeable men from
among your tribes, and I will make them
heads over you.' 14And you answered me
and said, 'The thing which you have told
us to do *is* good.' 15So I took the heads of
your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men,
and made them heads over you, leaders of
thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders
of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for
your tribes.

16"Then I commanded your judges at
that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases* between
your brethren, and judge righteously
between a man and his brother or the
stranger who is with him. 17You shall not
show partiality in judgment; you shall hear
the small as well as the great; you shall not
be afraid in any man's presence, for the
judgment *is* God's. The case that is too
hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear
it.' 18And I commanded you at that time all
the things which you should do.

Israel's Refusal to Enter the Land

19"So we departed from Horeb, and
went through all that great and terrible
wilderness which you saw on the way to
the mountains of the Amorites, as the
LORD our God had commanded us. Then
we came to Kadesh Barnea. 20And I said to
you, 'You have come to the mountains of
the Amorites, which the LORD our God is
giving us. 21Look, the LORD your God has
set the land before you; go up *and* possess
it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spo-
ken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.'

22"And every one of you came near to
me and said, 'Let us send men before us,
and let them search out the land for us,
and bring back word to us of the way by

1:1 [a]Hebrew *arabah* [b]One manuscript of the Septuagint, also Targum and Vulgate, read *Red Sea.* **1:4** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *and* (compare Joshua 12:4). **1:7** [a]Hebrew *arabah*

which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.'

23"The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from *each* tribe. 24And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. 25They also took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought *it* down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, '*It is* a good land which the LORD our God is giving us.'

26"Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; 27and you complained in your tents, and said, 'Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, "The people *are* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there." '

29"Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. 30The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.' 32Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, 33who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.

The Penalty for Israel's Rebellion

34"And the LORD heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 35'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, 36except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the LORD.' 37The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there. 38Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

39'Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. 40But *as for* you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.'

41"Then you answered and said to me, 'We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain.

42"And the LORD said to me, 'Tell them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I *am* not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies." ' 43So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain. 44And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do, and drove you back from Seir to Hormah. 45Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.

46"So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent *there.*

The Desert Years

2 "Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness of the Way of the Red Sea, as the LORD spoke to me, and we skirted Mount Seir for many days.

2"And the LORD spoke to me, saying: 3'You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward. 4And command the people, saying, "You *are about to* pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. 5Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau *as* a possession. 6You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink.

7"For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God *has been* with you; you have lacked nothing." '



8 "And when we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in
Seir, away from the road of the plain, away
from Elath and Ezion Geber, we turned and
passed by way of the Wilderness of Moab.
9 Then the LORD said to me, 'Do not harass
Moab, nor contend with them in battle,
for I will not give you *any* of their land *as* a
possession, because I have given Ar to the
descendants of Lot *as* a possession.'"
10 (The Emim had dwelt there in times
past, a people as great and numerous
and tall as the Anakim. 11 They were also
regarded as giants,[a] like the Anakim, but
the Moabites call them Emim. 12 The Horites
formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants
of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed
them from before them, and dwelt in their
place, just as Israel did to the land of their
possession which the LORD gave them.)
13 " 'Now rise and cross over the Valley of
the Zered.' So we crossed over the Valley of
the Zered. 14 And the time we took to come
from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over
the Valley of the Zered *was* thirty-eight years,
until all the generation of the men of war
was consumed from the midst of the camp,
just as the LORD had sworn to them. 15 For
indeed the hand of the LORD was against
them, to destroy them from the midst of the
camp until they were consumed.
16 "So it was, when all the men of war had
finally perished from among the people,
17 that the LORD spoke to me, saying: 18 'This
day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. 19 And *when* you come near the
people of Ammon, do not harass them or
meddle with them, for I will not give you
any of the land of the people of Ammon *as*
a possession, because I have given it to the
descendants of Lot *as* a possession.'"
20 (That was also regarded as a land of
giants;[a] giants formerly dwelt there. But
the Ammonites call them Zamzummim,
21 a people as great and numerous and tall
as the Anakim. But the LORD destroyed
them before them, and they dispossessed
them and dwelt in their place, 22 just as
He had done for the descendants of Esau,
who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the
Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even
to this day. 23 And the Avim, who dwelt in
villages as far as Gaza—the Caphtorim,
who came from Caphtor, destroyed them
and dwelt in their place.)
24 " 'Rise, take your journey, and cross
over the River Arnon. Look, I have given
into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of
Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess
it, and engage him in battle. 25 This day I
will begin to put the dread and fear of you
upon the nations under the whole heaven,
who shall hear the report of you, and shall
tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

King Sihon Defeated

26 "And I sent messengers from the
Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king
of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying,
27 'Let me pass through your land; I will keep
strictly to the road, and I will turn neither
to the right nor to the left. 28 You shall sell
me food for money, that I may eat, and give
me water for money, that I may drink; only
let me pass through on foot, 29 just as the
descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and
the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me,
until I cross the Jordan to the land which
the LORD our God is giving us.'
30 "But Sihon king of Heshbon would
not let us pass through, for the LORD your
God hardened his spirit and made his
heart obstinate, that He might deliver him
into your hand, as *it is* this day.
31 "And the LORD said to me, 'See, I have
begun to give Sihon and his land over
to you. Begin to possess *it,* that you may
inherit his land.' 32 Then Sihon and all his
people came out against us to fight at
Jahaz. 33 And the LORD our God delivered
him over to us; so we defeated him, his
sons, and all his people. 34 We took all his
cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed
the men, women, and little ones of every
city; we left none remaining. 35 We took
only the livestock as plunder for ourselves,
with the spoil of the cities which we took.
36 From Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the
River Arnon, and *from* the city that *is* in the
ravine, as far as Gilead, there was not one
city too strong for us; the LORD our God
delivered all to us. 37 Only you did not go
near the land of the people of Ammon—
anywhere along the River Jabbok, or to the

2:11 [a]Hebrew *rephaim* **2:20** [a]Hebrew *rephaim*

cities of the mountains, or wherever the LORD our God had forbidden us.

King Og Defeated

3 "Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan; and Og king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. 2And the LORD said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.'

3"So the LORD our God also delivered into our hands Og king of Bashan, with all his people, and we attacked him until he had no survivors remaining. 4And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5All these cities *were* fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many rural towns. 6And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. 7But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as booty for ourselves.

8"And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon 9(the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir), 10all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and all Bashan, as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

11"For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants.[a] Indeed his bedstead *was* an iron bedstead. (*Is* it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits *is* its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit.

The Land East of the Jordan Divided

12"And this land, *which* we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which *is* by the River Arnon, and half the mountains of Gilead and its cities, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites. 13The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh. (All the region of Argob, with all Bashan, was called the land of the giants.[a] 14Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and called Bashan after his own name, Havoth Jair,[a] to this day.)

15"Also I gave Gilead to Machir. 16And to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave from Gilead as far as the River Arnon, the middle of the river as *the* border, as far as the River Jabbok, the border of the people of Ammon; 17the plain also, with the Jordan as *the* border, from Chinnereth as far as the east side of the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), below the slopes of Pisgah.

18"Then I commanded you at that time, saying: 'The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel. 19But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall stay in your cities which I have given you, 20until the LORD has given rest to your brethren as to you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.'

21"And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. 22You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.'

Moses Forbidden to Enter the Land

23"Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying: 24'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god *is there* in heaven or on earth who can do *anything* like Your works and Your mighty *deeds?* 25I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.'

26"But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. 27Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold *it* with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. 28But

3:11 [a]Hebrew *rephaim* **3:13** [a]Hebrew *rephaim* **3:14** [a]Literally *Towns of Jair*

command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.'

29"So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor.

Moses Commands Obedience

4 "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. 2You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. 3Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. 4But you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive today, every one of you.

5"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according *to them* in the land which you go to possess. 6Therefore be careful to observe *them;* for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.'

7"For what great nation *is there* that has God *so* near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him? 8And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? 9Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, 10*especially concerning* the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.'

11"Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. 12And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; *you* only *heard* a voice. 13So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. 14And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.

Beware of Idolatry

15"Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, 16lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, 17the likeness of any animal that *is* on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, 18the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that *is* in the water beneath the earth. 19And *take heed,* lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and *when* you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage. 20But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. 21Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that I would not cross over the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. 22But I must die in this land, I must not cross over the Jordan;



but you shall cross over and possess that good land. 23Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. 24For the LORD your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God.

25"When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, 26I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong *your* days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. 27And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. 28And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. 29But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. 30When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice 31(for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

32"For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and *ask* from one end of heaven to the other, whether *any* great *thing* like this has happened, or *anything* like it has been heard. 33Did *any* people *ever* hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? 34Or did God *ever* try to go *and* take for Himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God; *there is* none other besides Him. 36Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. 37And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, 38driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land *as* an inheritance, as *it is* this day. 39Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart, that the LORD Himself *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; *there is* no other. 40You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

Cities of Refuge East of the Jordan

41Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, 42that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: 43Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

Introduction to God's Law

44Now this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. 45These *are* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, 46on this side of the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated after they came out of Egypt. 47And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, who *were* on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, 48from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, even to Mount Sion[a] (that is, Hermon), 49and all the plain on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, below the slopes of Pisgah.

4:48 [a]Syriac reads *Sirion* (compare 3:9).

The Ten Commandments Reviewed

5 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. 2The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who *are* here today, all of us who *are* alive. 4The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. 5I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. *He* said:

6 'I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
7 'You shall have no other gods before Me.
8 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; 9you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me,10but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
11 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.
12 'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.13Six days you shall labor and do all your work,14but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.15And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.
16 'Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.
17 'You shall not murder.
18 'You shall not commit adultery.
19 'You shall not steal.
20 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
21 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that *is* your neighbor's.'

22"These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

The People Afraid of God's Presence

23"So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24And you said: 'Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he *still* lives. 25Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die. 26For who *is there* of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have,* and lived? 27You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say, and tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear and do *it.*'

28"Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right *in* all that

they have spoken. 29Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! 30Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." 31But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe *them* in the land which I am giving them to possess.'

32"Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and *that it may be* well with you, and *that* you may prolong *your* days in the land which you shall possess.

The Greatest Commandment

6 "Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, 2that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it,* that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.'[a]

4"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one![a] 5You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Caution Against Disobedience

10"So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, 11houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full— 12*then* beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 13You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. 14You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who *are* all around you 15(for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

16"You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted *Him* in Massah. 17You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. 18And you shall do *what is* right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers, 19to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

20"When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is the meaning of* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?' 21then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; 22and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. 23Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers. 24And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as *it is* this day. 25Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.'

6:3 [a]Exodus 3:8 **6:4** [a]Or *The LORD is our God, the LORD alone* (that is, the only one)

The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you.

DEUTERONOMY 7:7, 8

We don't impress God by ganging up on Him, even in prayer. He is no democrat. (He is not a Republican either!) He does not sway to the majority or sway to the minority or move to the pressure of numbers. He is moved only by His love for us. When we give Him the gift of our trust in His loving judgment of what's good for us, it melts His sweet heart.

He is moved when we internalize His love and that moves us to put down our defenses and love each other. That is why we are told that "if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done by My Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:19). Harmony, agreement, love, empathy—these move Him and they cause Him to act for his children.



A Chosen People

7 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 2 and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. 3 Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. 4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. 5 But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images,[a] and burn their carved images with fire.

6 "For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; 10 and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. 11 Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

7:5 [a]Hebrew *Asherim*, Canaanite deities

Blessings of Obedience

12 "Then it shall come to pass, because
you listen to these judgments, and keep and
do them, that the LORD your God will keep
with you the covenant and the mercy which
He swore to your fathers. 13 And He will love
you and bless you and multiply you; He
will also bless the fruit of your womb and
the fruit of your land, your grain and your
new wine and your oil, the increase of your
cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the
land of which He swore to your fathers to
give you. 14 You shall be blessed above all
peoples; there shall not be a male or female
barren among you or among your livestock.
15 And the LORD will take away from you all
sickness, and will afflict you with none of
the terrible diseases of Egypt which you
have known, but will lay *them* on all those
who hate you. 16 Also you shall destroy all
the peoples whom the LORD your God deliv-
ers over to you; your eye shall have no pity
on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for
that *will be* a snare to you.

17 "If you should say in your heart, 'These
nations are greater than I; how can I dis-
possess them?'— 18 you shall not be afraid
of them, *but* you shall remember well what
the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to
all Egypt: 19 the great trials which your eyes
saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty
hand and the outstretched arm, by which
the LORD your God brought you out. So
shall the LORD your God do to all the peo-
ples of whom you are afraid. 20 Moreover the
LORD your God will send the hornet among
them until those who are left, who hide
themselves from you, are destroyed. 21 You
shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD
your God, the great and awesome God, *is*
among you. 22 And the LORD your God will
drive out those nations before you little by
little; you will be unable to destroy them at
once, lest the beasts of the field become *too*
numerous for you. 23 But the LORD your God
will deliver them over to you, and will inflict
defeat upon them until they are destroyed.
24 And He will deliver their kings into your
hand, and you will destroy their name from
under heaven; no one shall be able to stand
against you until you have destroyed them.
25 You shall burn the carved images of their
gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver
or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* for your-
selves, lest you be snared by it; for it *is* an
abomination to the LORD your God. 26 Nor
shall you bring an abomination into your
house, lest you be doomed to destruction
like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly
abhor it, for it *is* an accursed thing.

Remember the LORD Your God

8 "Every commandment which I com-
mand you today you must be careful to
observe, that you may live and multiply, and
go in and possess the land of which the LORD
swore to your fathers. 2 And you shall remem-
ber that the LORD your God led you all the
way these forty years in the wilderness, to
humble you *and* test you, to know what *was*
in your heart, whether you would keep His
commandments or not. 3 So He humbled
you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with
manna which you did not know nor did your
fathers know, that He might make you know
that man shall not live by bread alone; but
man lives by every *word* that proceeds from
the mouth of the LORD. 4 Your garments did
not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell
these forty years. 5 You should know in your
heart that as a man chastens his son, *so* the
LORD your God chastens you.

6 "Therefore you shall keep the com-
mandments of the LORD your God, to walk
in His ways and to fear Him. 7 For the LORD
your God is bringing you into a good land,
a land of brooks of water, of fountains and
springs, that flow out of valleys and hills;
8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and
fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive
oil and honey; 9 a land in which you will eat
bread without scarcity, in which you will
lack nothing; a land whose stones *are* iron
and out of whose hills you can dig copper.
10 When you have eaten and are full, then
you shall bless the LORD your God for the
good land which He has given you.

11 "Beware that you do not forget the LORD
your God by not keeping His command-
ments, His judgments, and His statutes
which I command you today, 12 lest—*when*
you have eaten and are full, and have built
beautiful houses and dwell *in them;* 13 and
when your herds and your flocks multiply,
and your silver and your gold are multiplied,

and all that you have is multiplied; 14when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, *in which were* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; 16who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end— 17then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'

18"And you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day. 19Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. 20As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.

Israel's Rebellions Reviewed

9 "Hear, O Israel: You *are* to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and *of whom* you heard *it said,* 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?' 3Therefore understand today that the LORD your God *is* He who goes over before you *as* a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it and ground it very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain. | DEUTERONOMY 9:21

"The brook that descended from the mountain." How that expression gripped my heart! I had a mental image of the quaking mountain spewing fire and frightening everyone. It was a very awesome scene and majestic. It spoke of the severe side of the Lord. At Mount Sinai it was the law in all of its holiness and perfection with the warnings of death to any violators. It was the contrast of that violent mountain with a gentle brook meandering down from the majesty that caught my spirit's attention. The contrast of the fire and the brook, the holiness of God, and the love of God touched me most. As I traced it out, I thought, *Oh, here is a picture of my Lord Jesus. He gently flows out of the majestic Godhead, into our sin as the brook flowed past the place where they were sinning with the golden calf. Into that brook Moses threw the dust of the demolished calf and the brook carried that sin far away.* Then I read that Moses commanded the sinners to drink from the brook that flowed out of the mountain and carried their sin away. Is that spiritualizing? It doesn't matter to my heart, for I have another glimpse of my Lord Jesus! He is the brook that descended from the mountain!

drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you.

4"Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD is driving them out from before you. 5*It is* not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart *that* you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you *are* a stiff-necked people.

7"Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. 8Also in Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry *enough* with you to have destroyed you. 9When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. 10Then the LORD delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them *were* all the words which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. 11And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.

12"Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly; they have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molded image.'

13"Furthermore the LORD spoke to me, saying, 'I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people. 14Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'

15"So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire; and the two tablets of the covenant *were* in my two hands. 16And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God—had made for yourselves a molded calf! You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you. 17Then I took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes. 18And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 19For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me at that time also. 20And the LORD was very angry with Aaron *and* would have destroyed him; so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. 21Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it *and* ground *it* very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain.

22"Also at Taberah and Massah and Kibroth Hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath. 23Likewise, when the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess the land which I have given you,' then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and you did not believe Him nor obey His voice. 24You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

25"Thus I prostrated myself before the LORD; forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself, because the LORD had said He would destroy you. 26Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said: 'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look on the stubbornness of this people, or on their wickedness or their sin, 28lest the land from which You brought us should say, "Because the LORD was not able

to bring them to the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness." 29Yet they *are* Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your outstretched arm.'

The Second Pair of Tablets

10 "At that time the LORD said to me, 'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. 2And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark.'

3"So I made an ark of acacia wood, hewed two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. 4And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. 5Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me."

6(Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died, and where he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. 7From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of rivers of water. 8At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. 9Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him.)

10"As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, *and* the LORD chose not to destroy you. 11Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, begin *your* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.'

The Essence of the Law

12"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13*and* to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? 14Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it. 15The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. 16Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. 17For the LORD your God *is* God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. 18He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. 19Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. 20You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. 21He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. 22Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.

Love and Obedience Rewarded

11 "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always. 2Know today that *I do* not *speak* with your children, who have not known and who have not seen the chastening of the LORD your God, His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm— 3His signs and His acts which He did in the midst of Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to all his land; 4what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and their chariots: how He made the waters of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued you, and *how* the LORD has destroyed them to this day; 5what He did for you in the wilderness until you came to this place; 6and what He

did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, their households, their tents, and all the substance that *was* in their possession, in the midst of all Israel— 7but your eyes have seen every great act of the LORD which He did.

8"Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, 9and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, 'a land flowing with milk and honey.'[a] 10For the land which you go to possess *is* not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered *it* by foot, as a vegetable garden; 11but the land which you cross over to possess *is* a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, 12a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God *are* always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.

13And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14then I[a] will give *you* the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. 15And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.' 16Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, 17lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

18"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 19You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 20And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

22"For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him— 23then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves. 24Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea,[a] shall be your territory. 25No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.

26"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; 28and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. 29Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. 30*Are* they not on the other side of the Jordan, toward the setting sun, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh? 31For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it. 32And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.

A Prescribed Place of Worship

12 "These *are* the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth. 2You shall utterly destroy all the places where the

11:9 [a]Exodus 3:8 **11:14** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *He*.
11:24 [a]That is, the Mediterranean

You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

DEUTERONOMY 13:3

This verse in a way reflects what the writer thought God was up to in our being tested—and he was partially right.

But God doesn't reveal the allegiance of our hearts for *His* information. He already knows whether we "love the LORD our God with all our heart and with all our soul." He is testing us to reveal to *us* where our true hearts lie. He is revealing to *us* our self-sufficiency and helping us to see how futile it is for us to rely on our own brains, abilities, influence, resources. Once we see ourselves for who we truly are under pressure, then we are humbled before God who *is* our strength. We pray for Him to *give* us strength, but *He* is our strength. He can't get us out of His mind.



nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 3And you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. 4You shall not worship the LORD your God *with* such *things.*

5"But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. 6There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. 7And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.

8"You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever *is* right in his own eyes— 9for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you. 10But *when* you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, 11then there will be the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD. 12And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who *is* within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you. 13Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; 14but in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

15"However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given

you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike. 16Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water. 17You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand. 18But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who *is* within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all to which you put your hands. 19Take heed to yourself that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

20"When the LORD your God enlarges your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'Let me eat meat,' because you long to eat meat, you may eat as much meat as your heart desires. 21If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock which the LORD has given you, just as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your gates as much as your heart desires. 22Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. 23Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood *is* the life; you may not eat the life with the meat. 24You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. 25You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you and your children after you, when you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD. 26Only the holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses. 27And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the meat. 28Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do *what is* good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

Beware of False Gods

29"When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, 30take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' 31You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

32"Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

Punishment of Apostates

13 "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, 2and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,' 3you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. 5But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.

6"If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, 7of the gods of the people which *are* all around you, near to you or far off from you, from *one* end of the earth to the *other* end of the earth, 8you

shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him; 9but you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. 10And you shall stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 11So all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you.

12"If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying, 13'Corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods" '—which you have not known—14then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And *if it is* indeed true *and* certain *that* such an abomination was committed among you, 15you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock—with the edge of the sword. 16And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again. 17So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy, have compassion on you and multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers, 18because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do *what is* right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

Improper Mourning

14 "You *are* the children of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead. 2For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth.

Clean and Unclean Meat

3"You shall not eat any detestable thing. 4These *are* the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, 5the deer, the



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, "You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land." | DEUTERONOMY 15:10, 11

One lovely summer evening our house guest reached for the red phone in the living room and dialed a long distance number. When her four-year-old granddaughter was on the line she said, "Tracie, darling, what would you like for your birthday?" The answer came back quick as an echo, "I'd love to have a dolly—and one for Ashley."

We laughed about how the little rascal had conned her grandmother into getting something for her little sister, too.

gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat,[a] the antelope, and the mountain sheep. 6And you may eat every animal with cloven hooves, having the hoof split into two parts, *and that* chews the cud, among the animals. 7Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat, *such as* these: the camel, the hare, and the rock hyrax; for they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves; they *are* unclean for you. 8Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet *does* not *chew* the cud; you shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses.

9"These you may eat of all that *are* in the waters: you may eat all that have fins and scales. 10And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it *is* unclean for you.

11"All clean birds you may eat. 12But these you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, 13the red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds; 14every raven after its kind; 15the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after their kinds; 16the little owl, the screech owl, the white owl, 17the jackdaw, the carrion vulture, the fisher owl, 18the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe and the bat.

19"Also every creeping thing that flies is unclean for you; they shall not be eaten.

20"You may eat all clean birds.

21"You shall not eat anything that dies *of itself;* you may give it to the alien who *is* within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God.

"You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Tithing Principles

22"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. 23And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. 24But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry *the tithe, or* if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from

14:5 [a]Or *addax*

The next day we went shopping and Marie bought two dolls. Is there a grandmother anywhere who would have purchased one? They were sister dolls—one a little bigger than the other—both in calico dresses, all packaged together.

"And one for Ashley" is the most basic impulse and expression of love in the world. Upon this same impulse have the great charities been started, schools built, hospitals set up and paid for, and missionaries sent to dark lands. The preachers and evangelists that have trod the earth have done so because something in their hearts said, "Ashley must also have this wonderful gift that I have received." And since they know the Lord's heart as a four-year-old knows her grandmother's heart, they have the courage to ask of Him in advance, "Please send one for Ashley." And because His heart is truer than any grandmother's heart, He has promised to answer our requests.

you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, 25then you shall exchange *it* for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. 26And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household. 27You shall not forsake the Levite who *is* within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.

28"At the end of *every* third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store *it* up within your gates. 29And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Debts Canceled Every Seven Years

15 "At the end of *every* seven years you shall grant a release *of debts.* 2And this *is* the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent *anything* to his neighbor shall release *it;* he shall not require *it* of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD's release. 3Of a foreigner you may require *it;* but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother, 4except when there may be no poor among you; for the LORD will greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess *as* an inheritance— 5only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today. 6For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.

Generosity to the Poor

7"If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, 8but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. 9Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. 10You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. 11For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'

The Law Concerning Bondservants

12"If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. 13And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; 14you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. *From what* the LORD your God has blessed you with, you shall give to him. 15You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today. 16And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, since he prospers with you, 17then you shall take an awl and thrust *it* through his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. 18It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant in serving you six years. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.

The Law Concerning Firstborn Animals

19"All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall sanctify to the LORD your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. 20You and your household shall eat *it* before the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD chooses. 21But if there is a defect in it, *if it is* lame or blind *or has* any

serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. 22You may eat it within your gates; the unclean and the clean *person* alike *may eat it,* as *if it were* a gazelle or a deer. 23Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it on the ground like water.

The Passover Reviewed

16 "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to put His name. 3You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, *that is,* the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. 4And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall *any* of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning.

5"You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you; 6but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt. 7And you shall roast and eat *it* in the place which the LORD your God chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. 8Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there *shall be* a sacred assembly to the LORD your God. You shall do no work *on it*.

The Feast of Weeks Reviewed

9"You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from *the time* you begin *to put* the sickle to the grain. 10Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. 11You shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who *is* within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. 12And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

The Feast of Tabernacles Reviewed

13"You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. 14And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who *are* within your gates. 15Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.

16"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. 17Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

Justice Must Be Administered

18"You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. 20You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

21"You shall not plant for yourself any tree, as a wooden image, near the altar which you build for yourself to the LORD your God. 22You shall not set up a *sacred* pillar, which the LORD your God hates.

17 "You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish *or* defect, for that *is* an abomination to the LORD your God.

2"If there is found among you, within
any of your gates which the LORD your God
gives you, a man or a woman who has been
wicked in the sight of the LORD your God,
in transgressing His covenant, 3who has
gone and served other gods and worshiped
them, either the sun or moon or any of
the host of heaven, which I have not com-
manded, 4and it is told you, and you hear
of it, then you shall inquire diligently. And
if *it is* indeed true *and* certain that such an
abomination has been committed in Israel,
5then you shall bring out to your gates that
man or woman who has committed that
wicked thing, and shall stone to death that
man or woman with stones. 6Whoever is
deserving of death shall be put to death
on the testimony of two or three witnesses;
he shall not be put to death on the tes-
timony of one witness. 7The hands of the
witnesses shall be the first against him to
put him to death, and afterward the hands
of all the people. So you shall put away the
evil from among you.

8"If a matter arises which is too hard
for you to judge, between degrees of guilt
for bloodshed, between one judgment or
another, or between one punishment or
another, matters of controversy within
your gates, then you shall arise and go
up to the place which the LORD your
God chooses. 9And you shall come to the
priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there*
in those days, and inquire *of them;* they
shall pronounce upon you the sentence
of judgment. 10You shall do according to
the sentence which they pronounce upon
you in that place which the LORD chooses.
And you shall be careful to do according to
all that they order you. 11According to the
sentence of the law in which they instruct
you, according to the judgment which they
tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn
aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left from
the sentence which they pronounce upon
you. 12Now the man who acts presump-
tuously and will not heed the priest who
stands to minister there before the LORD
your God, or the judge, that man shall die.
So you shall put away the evil from Israel.
13And all the people shall hear and fear,
and no longer act presumptuously.

Principles Governing Kings

14"When you come to the land which the
LORD your God is giving you, and possess it
and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king
over me like all the nations that *are* around
me,' 15you shall surely set a king over you
whom the LORD your God chooses; *one* from
among your brethren you shall set as king
over you; you may not set a foreigner over
you, who *is* not your brother. 16But he shall
not multiply horses for himself, nor cause
the people to return to Egypt to multiply
horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You
shall not return that way again.' 17Neither
shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his
heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multi-
ply silver and gold for himself.

18"Also it shall be, when he sits on the
throne of his kingdom, that he shall write
for himself a copy of this law in a book,
from *the one* before the priests, the Levites.
19And it shall be with him, and he shall
read it all the days of his life, that he may
learn to fear the LORD his God and be care-
ful to observe all the words of this law and
these statutes, 20that his heart may not be
lifted above his brethren, that he may not
turn aside from the commandment *to* the
right hand or *to* the left, and that he may
prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his
children in the midst of Israel.

The Portion of the Priests and Levites

18 "The priests, the Levites—all the
tribe of Levi—shall have no part
nor inheritance with Israel; they shall eat
the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and
His portion. 2Therefore they shall have no
inheritance among their brethren; the LORD
is their inheritance, as He said to them.

3"And this shall be the priest's due from
the people, from those who offer a sacrifice,
whether *it is* bull or sheep: they shall give to
the priest the shoulder, the cheeks, and the
stomach. 4The firstfruits of your grain and
your new wine and your oil, and the first of
the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him.
5For the LORD your God has chosen him out
of all your tribes to stand to minister in the
name of the LORD, him and his sons forever.

6"So if a Levite comes from any of your
gates, from where he dwells among all Israel,

and comes with all the desire of his mind to the place which the LORD chooses, 7then he may serve in the name of the LORD his God as all his brethren the Levites *do,* who stand there before the LORD. 8They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what comes from the sale of his inheritance.

Avoid Wicked Customs

9"When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. 10There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or* a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. 13You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. 14For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.

A New Prophet Like Moses

15"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, 16according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'

17"And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. 18I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him. 20But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' 21And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'— 22when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Three Cities of Refuge

19 "When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, 2you shall separate three cities for yourself

Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.

MARTIN LUTHER

in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess. 3You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there.

4"And this *is* the case of the manslayer who flees there, that he may live: Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally, not having hated him in time past— 5as when *a man* goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he shall flee to one of these cities and live; 6lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he *was* not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past. 7Therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall separate three cities for yourself.'

8"Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you the land which He promised to give to your fathers, 9and if you keep all these commandments and do them, which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways, then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three, 10lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you *as*

an inheritance, and *thus* guilt of bloodshed be upon you.

11"But if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally, so that he dies, and he flees to one of these cities, 12then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. 13Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall put away *the guilt of* innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with you.

Property Boundaries

14"You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

The Law Concerning Witnesses

15"One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. 16If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, 17then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. 18And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, *if* the witness *is* a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, 19then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. 20And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. 21Your eye shall not pity: life *shall be* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Principles Governing Warfare

20 "When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God *is* with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. 2So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people. 3And he shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; 4for the LORD your God *is* He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'

5"Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying: 'What man *is there* who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. 6Also what man *is there* who has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it. 7And what man *is there* who is betrothed to a woman and has not married her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man marry her.'

8"The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, 'What man *is there who is* fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, lest the heart of his brethren faint[a] like his heart.' 9And so it shall be, when the officers have finished speaking to the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

10"When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. 11And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people *who are* found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you. 12Now if *the city* will not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. 13And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword. 14But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and you shall eat the enemies' plunder which the LORD your God gives you. 15Thus you shall do to all the cities *which are* very far from you, which *are* not of the cities of these nations.

16"But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you *as* an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, 17but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God

20:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *lest he make his brother's heart faint.*

has commanded you, [18]lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

[19]"When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them; if you can eat of them, do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the tree of the field *is* man's *food*. [20]Only the trees which you know *are* not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, to build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it is subdued.

The Law Concerning Unsolved Murder

21 "If *anyone* is found slain, lying in the field in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess, *and* it is not known who killed him, [2]then your elders and your judges shall go out and measure *the distance* from the slain man to the surrounding cities. [3]And it shall be *that* the elders of the city nearest to the slain man will take a heifer which has not been worked *and* which has not pulled with a yoke. [4]The elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with flowing water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and they shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley. [5]Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name of the LORD; by their word every controversy and every assault shall be *settled*. [6]And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain *man* shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley. [7]Then they shall answer and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen *it*. [8]Provide atonement, O LORD, for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people Israel.' And atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood. [9]So you shall put away the *guilt of* innocent blood from among you when you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD.

Female Captives

[10]"When you go out to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive, [11]and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife, [12]then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. [13]She shall put off the clothes of her captivity, remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. [14]And it shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall set her free, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; you shall not treat her brutally, because you have humbled her.

Firstborn Inheritance Rights

[15]"If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and they have borne him children, *both* the loved and the unloved, and *if* the firstborn son is of her who is unloved, [16]then it shall be, on the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons, *that* he must not bestow firstborn status on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the *true* firstborn. [17]But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife *as* the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he *is* the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn *is* his.

The Rebellious Son

[18]"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and *who,* when they have chastened him, will not heed them, [19]then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. [20]And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' [21]Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.

Miscellaneous Laws

[22]"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, [23]his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you

do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance; for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.

22 "You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back to your brother. 2And if your brother *is* not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it to your own house, and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it; then you shall restore it to him. 3You shall do the same with his donkey, and so shall you do with his garment; with any lost thing of your brother's, which he has lost and you have found, you shall do likewise; you must not hide yourself.

4"You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift *them* up again.

5"A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.

6"If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; 7you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and *that* you may prolong *your* days.

8"When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it.

9"You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled.

10"You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

11"You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, *such as* wool and linen mixed together.

12"You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover *yourself*.

Laws of Sexual Morality

13"If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and detests her, 14and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, 'I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she *was* not a virgin,' 15then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out *the evidence of* the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. 16And the young woman's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her. 17Now he has charged her



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you. | DEUTERONOMY 23:22

I would probably be on the top of the list of those who have gone back on their vows. Some of my vows have been rash vows; some of my vows have been very spiritual. The only vows I am able to keep are new covenant vows. By that I mean vows that I keep by the grace of God. When He enables me to keep a promise, I have hope. This verse set me free! I do not make vows any more. If my heart is inclined to do something for the Lord, I just do it; I do not promise that I will do it. I can't break a vow I have not made. It is far safer to just live unto the Lord without making vows that will certainly be broken and need to be repented of.

with shameful conduct, saying, "I found your daughter *was* not a virgin," and yet these *are the evidences of* my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him; 19and they shall fine him one hundred *shekels* of silver and give *them* to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days.

20"But if the thing is true, *and evidences of* virginity are not found for the young woman, 21then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

22"If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die—the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel.

23"If a young woman *who is* a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, 24then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he humbled his neighbor's wife; so you shall put away the evil from among you.

25"But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. 26But you shall do nothing to the young woman; *there is* in the young woman no sin *deserving* of death, for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so *is* this matter. 27For he found her in the countryside, *and* the betrothed young woman cried out, but *there was* no one to save her.

28"If a man finds a young woman *who is* a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, 29then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.

30"A man shall not take his father's wife, nor uncover his father's bed.

Those Excluded from the Congregation

23 "He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD.

2"One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

3"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, 4because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia,[a] to curse you. 5Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. 6You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.

7"You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he *is* your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. 8The children of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

Cleanliness of the Campsite

9"When the army goes out against your enemies, then keep yourself from every wicked thing. 10If there is any man among you who becomes unclean by some occurrence in the night, then he shall go outside the camp; he shall not come inside the camp. 11But it shall be, when evening comes, that he shall wash with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp.

12"Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; 13and you shall have an implement among your equipment, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse. 14For the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He

23:4 [a]Hebrew *Aram Naharaim*

may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.

Miscellaneous Laws

15 "You shall not give back to his master the slave who has escaped from his master to you. 16 He may dwell with you in your midst, in the place which he chooses within one of your gates, where it seems best to him; you shall not oppress him.

17 "There shall be no *ritual* harlot[a] of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted[b] one of the sons of Israel. 18 You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog to the house of the LORD your God for any vowed offering, for both of these *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.

19 "You shall not charge interest to your brother—interest on money *or* food *or* anything that is lent out at interest. 20 To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother you shall not charge interest, that the LORD your God may bless you in all to which you set your hand in the land which you are entering to possess.

21 "When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you. 22 But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you. 23 That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.

24 "When you come into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put *any* in your container. 25 When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain.

Law Concerning Divorce

24 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, 2 when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's *wife,* 3 *if* the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, 4 *then* her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that *is* an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance.

Miscellaneous Laws

5 "When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.

6 "No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in pledge, for he takes *one's* living in pledge.

7 "If a man is found kidnapping any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and mistreats him or sells him, then that kidnapper shall die; and you shall put away the evil from among you.

8 "Take heed in an outbreak of leprosy, that you carefully observe and do according to all that the priests, the Levites, shall teach you; just as I commanded them, *so* you shall be careful to do. 9 Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt!

10 "When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge. 11 You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you. 12 And if the man *is* poor, you shall not keep his pledge overnight. 13 You shall in any case return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his own garment and bless you; and it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God.

14 "You shall not oppress a hired servant *who is* poor and needy, *whether* one of your brethren or one of the aliens who *is* in your land within your gates. 15 Each day you shall give *him* his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he *is* poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you.

16 "Fathers shall not be put to death for

23:17 [a]Hebrew *qedeshah,* feminine of *qadesh* (see note *b*) [b]Hebrew *qadesh,* that is, one practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals

their children, nor shall children be put to death for *their* fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin.

17 "You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow's garment as a pledge. 18 But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this thing.

19 "When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. 21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean *it* afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. 22 And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing.

25 "If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that *the judges* may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, 2 then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. 3 Forty blows he may give him *and* no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother be humiliated in your sight.

4 "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out *the grain.*

Marriage Duty of the Surviving Brother

5 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside *the family;* her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. 6 And it shall be *that* the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. 7 But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.' 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But *if* he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,' 9 then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.' 10 And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'

Miscellaneous Laws

11 "If *two* men fight together, and the wife of one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of the one attacking him, and puts out her hand and seizes him by the genitals, 12 then you shall cut off her hand; your eye shall not pity *her.*

13 "You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. 14 You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. 15 You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. 16 For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.

Destroy the Amalekites

17 "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, 18 how he met you on the way and attacked



your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you *were* tired and weary; and he did not fear God. 19Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess *as* an inheritance, *that* you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.

Offerings of Firstfruits and Tithes

26 "And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, 2that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and put *it* in a basket and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. 3And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD your[a] God that I have come to the country which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.'

4"Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God. 5And you shall answer and say before the LORD your God: 'My father *was* a Syrian,[a] about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. 6But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. 7Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. 8So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. 9He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, "a land flowing with milk and honey";[a] 10and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me.'

"Then you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God. 11So you shall rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who *is* among you.

12"When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year—the year of tithing—and have given *it* to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, 13then you shall say before the LORD your God: 'I have removed the holy *tithe* from *my* house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten *them.* 14I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed *any* of it for an unclean *use,* nor given *any* of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me. 15Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just as You swore to our fathers, "a land flowing with milk and honey." '[a]

A Special People of God

16"This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. 17Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. 18Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that *you* should keep all His commandments, 19and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken."

The Law Inscribed on Stones

27 Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today. 2And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime. 3You shall write on them all the words of this law,

26:3 [a]Septuagint reads *my.* **26:5** [a]Or *Aramean* **26:9** [a]Exodus 3:8
26:15 [a]Exodus 3:8

when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you, 'a land flowing with milk and honey,'[a] just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you. 4Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, *that* on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. 5And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron *tool* on them. 6You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. 7You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before the LORD your God. 8And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law."

9Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, "Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the LORD your God. 10Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."

Curses Pronounced from Mount Ebal

11And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, 12"These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; 13and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

14"And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel: 15'Cursed *is* the one who makes a carved or molded image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets *it* up in secret.'

"And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!'

16'Cursed *is* the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

17'Cursed *is* the one who moves his neighbor's landmark.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

18'Cursed *is* the one who makes the blind to wander off the road.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

19'Cursed *is* the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

20'Cursed *is* the one who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's bed.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

21'Cursed *is* the one who lies with any kind of animal.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

22'Cursed *is* the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

23'Cursed *is* the one who lies with his mother-in-law.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

24'Cursed *is* the one who attacks his neighbor secretly.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

25'Cursed *is* the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

26'Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law by observing them.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Blessings on Obedience

28 "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. 2And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

3"Blessed *shall* you *be* in the city, and blessed *shall* you *be* in the country.

4"Blessed *shall be* the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

5"Blessed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

6"Blessed *shall* you *be* when you come in, and blessed *shall* you *be* when you go out.

7"The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

27:3 [a]Exodus 3:8

8"The LORD will command the blessing
on you in your storehouses and in all to
which you set your hand, and He will bless
you in the land which the LORD your God
is giving you.
9"The LORD will establish you as a holy
people to Himself, just as He has sworn to
you, if you keep the commandments of the
LORD your God and walk in His ways. 10Then
all peoples of the earth shall see that you
are called by the name of the LORD, and
they shall be afraid of you. 11And the LORD
will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of
your body, in the increase of your livestock,
and in the produce of your ground, in the

My heart, which is so full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary.

MARTIN LUTHER

land of which the LORD swore to your fathers
to give you. 12The LORD will open to you His
good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain
to your land in its season, and to bless all the
work of your hand. You shall lend to many
nations, but you shall not borrow. 13And the
LORD will make you the head and not the tail;
you shall be above only, and not be beneath,
if you heed the commandments of the LORD
your God, which I command you today, and
are careful to observe *them*. 14So you shall
not turn aside from any of the words which
I command you this day, *to* the right or the
left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Curses on Disobedience

15"But it shall come to pass, if you do
not obey the voice of the LORD your God,
to observe carefully all His command-
ments and His statutes which I command
you today, that all these curses will come
upon you and overtake you:
16"Cursed *shall* you *be* in the city, and
cursed *shall* you *be* in the country.
17"Cursed *shall be* your basket and your
kneading bowl.
18"Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body
and the produce of your land, the increase of
your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.
19"Cursed *shall* you *be* when you come
in, and cursed *shall* you *be* when you go out.
20"The LORD will send on you cursing,
confusion, and rebuke in all that you set
your hand to do, until you are destroyed
and until you perish quickly, because of
the wickedness of your doings in which you
have forsaken Me. 21The LORD will make the
plague cling to you until He has consumed
you from the land which you are going to
possess. 22The LORD will strike you with con-
sumption, with fever, with inflammation,
with severe burning fever, with the sword,
with scorching, and with mildew; they shall
pursue you until you perish. 23And your
heavens which *are* over your head shall be
bronze, and the earth which is under you
shall be iron. 24The LORD will change the rain
of your land to powder and dust; from the
heaven it shall come down on you until you
are destroyed.
25"The LORD will cause you to be defeated
before your enemies; you shall go out one
way against them and flee seven ways before
them; and you shall become troublesome
to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26Your car-
casses shall be food for all the birds of the air
and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall
frighten *them* away. 27The LORD will strike you
with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with
the scab, and with the itch, from which you
cannot be healed. 28The LORD will strike you
with madness and blindness and confusion
of heart. 29And you shall grope at noonday,
as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall
not prosper in your ways; you shall be only
oppressed and plundered continually, and
no one shall save *you*.
30"You shall betroth a wife, but another
man shall lie with her; you shall build a
house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall
plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its
grapes. 31Your ox *shall be* slaughtered before
your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your
donkey *shall be* violently taken away from
before you, and shall not be restored to you;
your sheep *shall be* given to your enemies,
and you shall have no one to rescue *them*.
32Your sons and your daughters *shall be* given
to another people, and your eyes shall look
and fail *with longing* for them all day long;
and *there shall be* no strength in your hand.
33A nation whom you have not known shall

eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. 34So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. 35The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

36"The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone. 37And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you.

38"You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. 39You shall plant vineyards and tend *them,* but you shall neither drink *of* the wine nor gather the *grapes;* for the worms shall eat them. 40You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint *yourself* with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. 41You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. 42Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land.

43"The alien who *is* among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. 44He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

45"Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. 46And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever.

47"Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, 48therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. 49The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, 50a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. 51And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, *or* the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you.

52"They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you. 53You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you. 54The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, 55so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. 56The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse[a] to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, 57her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

58"If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, 59then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. 60Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. 61Also every sickness and every plague, which *is* not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon

28:56 [a]Literally *her eye shall be evil toward*

you until you are destroyed. 62You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. 63And it shall be, *that* just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess.

64"Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. 65And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. 66Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. 67In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.

68"And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, 'You shall never see it again.' And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy *you*."

The Covenant Renewed in Moab

29 These *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

2Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land— 3the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders. 4Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this *very* day. 5And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet. 6You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or *similar* drink, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God. 7And when you came to this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we conquered them. 8We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh. 9Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

10"All of you stand today before the LORD your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel, 11your little ones and your wives—also the stranger who *is* in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water— 12that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today, 13that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and *that* He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

14"I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, 15but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with *him* who *is* not here with us today 16(for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by, 17and you saw their abominations and their idols which *were* among them—wood and stone and silver and gold); 18so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood; 19and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates[a] of my heart'—as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.

20"The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven. 21And the LORD would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for

29:19 [a]Or *stubbornness*

adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law, [22]so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it:

[23]'The whole land *is* brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.' [24]"All nations would say, 'Why has the LORD done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?' [25]Then *people* would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt; [26]for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them. [27]Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book. [28]And the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day.'

[29]"The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are* revealed *belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

The Blessing of Returning to God

30 "Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, [2]and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, [3]that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. [4]If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. [5]Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. [6]And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

[7]"Also the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. [8]And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today. [9]The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, [10]if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

The Choice of Life or Death

[11]"For this commandment which I command you today *is* not *too* mysterious for you, nor *is* it far off. [12]It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' [13]Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' [14]But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

[15]"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, [16]in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. [17]But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, [18]I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. [19]I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; there-

In the wasteland, a howling wilderness,
He encircled [Jacob], He instructed him,
He kept him as the apple of His eye. As
an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its
young, spreading out its wings, taking
them up, carrying them on its wings, so
the LORD alone led him.

DEUTERONOMY 32:10–12

God, the obsessed mother! A good mother draws safe parameters for the little ones and never takes her eyes off them. When there is an invader or any threat to their safety, she is ferocious. But most of the time she provides such a space of security that her children forget to be aware of her care. They play carefree, glancing up now and then from their childish industry only to assure themselves of her presence. When they are obedient children (not hurting themselves or others), a whole day can go by in happy occupation. She brings a picnic for lunch; she spreads a blanket in the shade for a nap. She teaches them the secrets of nature—seashells, acorns, bird nests. They grow strong and wise, fearless and confident.

God is like that. Living in His safety as we do, we forget who provides the constant, daily protection. Sometimes we think the safe space is to be assumed, and sometimes we take credit for what we accomplish in our small industry, forgetting that the provisions, the teaching, and the safety are not of our own doing.

Lord, today help me live, play, and work gratefully—always aware of Your protective, inspiring, and educating presence.

fore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; [20]that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Joshua the New Leader of Israel

31 Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. [2]And he said to them: "I *am* one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross over this Jordan.' [3]The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said. [4]And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them. [5]The LORD will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you. [6]Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

[7]Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. [8]And the LORD, He *is* the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."

The Law to Be Read Every Seven Years

[9]So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. [10]And Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of *every* seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, [11]when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. [12]Gather the people together, men and women and little ones,

and the stranger who *is* within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, 13and *that* their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

Prediction of Israel's Rebellion

14Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him."

So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. 15Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle.

16And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go *to be* among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. 17Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God *is* not among us?' 18And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.

19"Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. 20When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. 21Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for I know the inclination of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore *to give them.*"

Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.

DEUTERONOMY 31:19

22Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. 23Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you."

Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel.

DEUTERONOMY 31:22

24So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, 25that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: 26"Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; 27for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. *If* today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death? 28Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands."

The Song of Moses

30 Then Moses spoke in the hearing of
all the assembly of Israel the words of this
song until they were ended:

32 "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak;
And hear, O earth, the words of my
mouth.
2 Let my teaching drop as the rain,
My speech distill as the dew,
As raindrops on the tender herb,
And as showers on the grass.
3 For I proclaim the name of the LORD:
Ascribe greatness to our God.
4 *He is* the Rock, His work *is* perfect;
For all His ways *are* justice,
A God of truth and without
injustice;
Righteous and upright *is* He.

5 "They have corrupted themselves;
They are not His children,
Because of their blemish:
A perverse and crooked generation.
6 Do you thus deal with the LORD,
O foolish and unwise people?
Is He not your Father, *who* bought you?
Has He not made you and established
you?

7 "Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many
generations.
Ask your father, and he will show you;
Your elders, and they will tell you:
8 When the Most High divided their
inheritance to the nations,
When He separated the sons of Adam,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the
children of Israel.
9 For the LORD's portion *is* His people;
Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance.

10 "He found him in a desert land
And in the wasteland, a howling
wilderness;
He encircled him, He instructed him,
He kept him as the apple of His eye.
11 As an eagle stirs up its nest,
Hovers over its young,
Spreading out its wings, taking them up,
Carrying them on its wings,
12 *So* the LORD alone led him,
And *there was* no foreign god with him.

13 "He made him ride in the heights of
the earth,
That he might eat the produce of
the fields;
He made him draw honey from the rock,
And oil from the flinty rock;
14 Curds from the cattle, and milk of
the flock,
With fat of lambs;
And rams of the breed of Bashan,
and goats,
With the choicest wheat;
And you drank wine, the blood of
the grapes.

15 "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked;
You grew fat, you grew thick,
You are obese!
Then he forsook God *who* made him,
And scornfully esteemed the Rock of
his salvation.
16 They provoked Him to jealousy with
foreign *gods;*
With abominations they provoked Him
to anger.
17 They sacrificed to demons, not
to God,
To gods they did not know,
To new *gods,* new arrivals
That your fathers did not fear.
18 Of the Rock *who* begot you, you are
unmindful,
And have forgotten the God who
fathered you.

19 "And when the LORD saw *it,* He spurned
them,
Because of the provocation of His sons
and His daughters.
20 And He said: 'I will hide My face from
them,
I will see what their end *will be,*
For they *are* a perverse generation,
Children in whom *is* no faith.
21 They have provoked Me to jealousy by
what is not God;
They have moved Me to anger by their
foolish idols.
But I will provoke them to jealousy by
those who are not a nation;
I will move them to anger by a foolish
nation.

22 For a fire is kindled in My anger,
And shall burn to the lowest hell;
It shall consume the earth with her increase,
And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

23 'I will heap disasters on them;
I will spend My arrows on them.
24 *They shall be* wasted with hunger,
Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction;
I will also send against them the teeth of beasts,
With the poison of serpents of the dust.
25 The sword shall destroy outside;
There shall be terror within
For the young man and virgin,
The nursing child with the man of gray hairs.
26 I would have said, "I will dash them in pieces,
I will make the memory of them to cease from among men,"
27 Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy,
Lest their adversaries should misunderstand,
Lest they should say, "Our hand *is* high;
And it is not the LORD who has done all this." '

28 "For they *are* a nation void of counsel,
Nor *is there any* understanding in them.
29 Oh, that they were wise, *that* they understood this,
That they would consider their latter end!
30 How could one chase a thousand,
And two put ten thousand to flight,
Unless their Rock had sold them,
And the LORD had surrendered them?
31 For their rock *is* not like our Rock,
Even our enemies themselves *being* judges.
32 For their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom
And of the fields of Gomorrah;
Their grapes *are* grapes of gall,
Their clusters *are* bitter.
33 Their wine *is* the poison of serpents,
And the cruel venom of cobras.

34 'Is this not laid up in store with Me,
Sealed up among My treasures?
35 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense;
Their foot shall slip in *due* time;
For the day of their calamity *is* at hand,
And the things to come hasten upon them.'

So Moses came with Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people.
DEUTERONOMY 32:44

36 "For the LORD will judge His people
And have compassion on His servants,
When He sees that *their* power is gone,
And *there is* no one *remaining,* bond or free.
37 He will say: 'Where *are* their gods,
The rock in which they sought refuge?
38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,
And drank the wine of their drink offering?
Let them rise and help you,
And be your refuge.

39 'Now see that I, *even* I, *am* He,
And *there is* no God besides Me;
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
Nor *is there any* who can deliver from My hand.
40 For I raise My hand to heaven,
And say, "*As* I live forever,
41 If I whet My glittering sword,
And My hand takes hold on judgment,
I will render vengeance to My enemies,
And repay those who hate Me.
42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood,
And My sword shall devour flesh,
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the heads of the leaders of the enemy." '

43 "Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people;[a]
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,
And render vengeance to His adversaries;
He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people."

44 So Moses came with Joshua[a] the son of

32:43 [a]A Dead Sea Scroll fragment adds *And let all the gods (angels) worship Him* (compare Septuagint and Hebrews 1:6). **32:44** [a]Hebrew *Hoshea* (compare Numbers 13:8, 16)

Gospel Songs

The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.

DEUTERONOMY 33:27

AS PRINCIPAL of the Southern Normal Music Institute of Georgia, Anthony Showalter was challenged when he received two weighty letters from former students; both informed him they had suffered the loss of their wives and were seeking comfort and guidance. Showalter, understanding the depth of their losses and the desire to give them godly counsel, wisely searched the Scriptures and landed in Deuteronomy 33, where Moses is saying good-bye to the people of Israel.

The Israelites were coming to the end of a forty-year journey through the wilderness, finally approaching the Promised Land. Decades earlier, they set out from Egypt, miraculously claiming their freedom from Pharaoh and his slave drivers. They had walked on dry ground through the Red Sea, drunk water that sprang from a rock, eaten food that materialized every morning on the ground, and unsure of their destination, followed a cloud by day and a pillar of blazing fire by night. They also suffered for the grumbling and complaining, disobedience, idolatry, and lack of faith in their God and their leader, Moses. They witnessed an entire generation die, saw hundreds of rebellious brethren swallowed by the earth, and then when they complained about it, saw fourteen thousand more die in a plague. Now, the Israelites were bracing for what could be their greatest loss of all—Moses. Moses had always been their go-between with the Lord, dispensing His laws, directing them in His path, administering His justice. Now, as he lay on his deathbed, what words would Moses leave them with as they said good-bye to him and entered their long-awaited Promised Land?

The same words that Anthony Showalter would use to encourage his students in their losses, "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." As Showalter wrote out letters to his grieving former students, he also was inspired to write the refrain to "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms." Then he wrote another letter, this time to his friend Elisha Hoffman, explaining, "Here is the chorus for a good hymn from Deuteronomy 33:27, but I can't come up with any verses." After Hoffman sent him three verses, Showalter put the lyrics to music.

The message of Showalter's song, the message of Moses, and the message of the Lord to all of us is clear: Our refuge is God alone. We need only to lean on the everlasting arms of the one who has the whole world in His hands.

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Anthony J. Showalter and Elisha A. Hoffman, 1887

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain:
Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. 45Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 46and he said to them: "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. 47For it *is* not a futile thing for you, because it *is* your life, and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess."

Moses to Die on Mount Nebo

48Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: 49"Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; 50and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; 51because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel. 52Yet you shall see the land before *you,* though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel."

Moses' Final Blessing on Israel

33 Now this *is* the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. 2And he said:

"The LORD came from Sinai,
And dawned on them from Seir;
He shone forth from Mount Paran,
And He came with ten thousands of saints;
From His right hand
Came a fiery law for them.
3 Yes, He loves the people;
All His saints *are* in Your hand;
They sit down at Your feet;
Everyone receives Your words.
4 Moses commanded a law for us,
A heritage of the congregation of Jacob.
5 And He was King in Jeshurun,
When the leaders of the people were gathered,
All the tribes of Israel together.

6 "Let Reuben live, and not die,
Nor let his men be few."

7And this he said of Judah:

"Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah,
And bring him to his people;
Let his hands be sufficient for him,
And may You be a help against his enemies."

8And of Levi he said:

"*Let* Your Thummim and Your Urim *be* with Your holy one,
Whom You tested at Massah,
And with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah,
9 Who says of his father and mother,
'I have not seen them';
Nor did he acknowledge his brothers,
Or know his own children;
For they have observed Your word
And kept Your covenant.
10 They shall teach Jacob Your judgments,
And Israel Your law.
They shall put incense before You,
And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar.
11 Bless his substance, LORD,
And accept the work of his hands;
Strike the loins of those who rise against him,
And of those who hate him, that they rise not again."

12Of Benjamin he said:

"The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him,
Who shelters him all the day long;
And he shall dwell between His shoulders."

13 And of Joseph he said:

"Blessed of the LORD *is* his land,
With the precious things of heaven, with the dew,
And the deep lying beneath,

14 With the precious fruits of the sun,
With the precious produce of the months,
15 With the best things of the ancient mountains,
With the precious things of the everlasting hills,
16 With the precious things of the earth and its fullness,
And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush.
Let *the blessing* come 'on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of him *who was* separate from his brothers.'[a]
17 His glory *is like* a firstborn bull,
And his horns *like* the horns of the wild ox;
Together with them
He shall push the peoples
To the ends of the earth;
They *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim,
And they *are* the thousands of Manasseh."

18 And of Zebulun he said:

"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,
And Issachar in your tents!
19 They shall call the peoples *to* the mountain;
There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness;
For they shall partake *of* the abundance of the seas
And *of* treasures hidden in the sand."

20 And of Gad he said:

"Blessed *is* he who enlarges Gad;
He dwells as a lion,
And tears the arm and the crown of his head.
21 He provided the first *part* for himself,
Because a lawgiver's portion was reserved there.
He came *with* the heads of the people;
He administered the justice of the LORD,
And His judgments with Israel."

22 And of Dan he said:

"Dan *is* a lion's whelp;
He shall leap from Bashan."

23 And of Naphtali he said:

"O Naphtali, satisfied with favor,
And full of the blessing of the LORD,
Possess the west and the south."
24 And of Asher he said:

"Asher *is* most blessed of sons;
Let him be favored by his brothers,
And let him dip his foot in oil.
25 Your sandals *shall be* iron and bronze;
As your days, *so shall* your strength *be*.
26 "*There is* no one like the God of Jeshurun,
Who rides the heavens to help you,
And in His excellency on the clouds.
27 The eternal God *is your* refuge,
And underneath *are* the everlasting arms;
He will thrust out the enemy from before you,
And will say, 'Destroy!'
28 Then Israel shall dwell in safety,
The fountain of Jacob alone,
In a land of grain and new wine;
His heavens shall also drop dew.
29 Happy *are* you, O Israel!
Who *is* like you, a people saved by the LORD,
The shield of your help
And the sword of your majesty!
Your enemies shall submit to you,
And you shall tread down their high places."

33:16 [a]Genesis 49:26



Moses Dies on Mount Nebo

34 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, 2all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea,[a] 3the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4Then the LORD said to him, "This *is* the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."

5So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. 7Moses *was* one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. 8And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses ended.

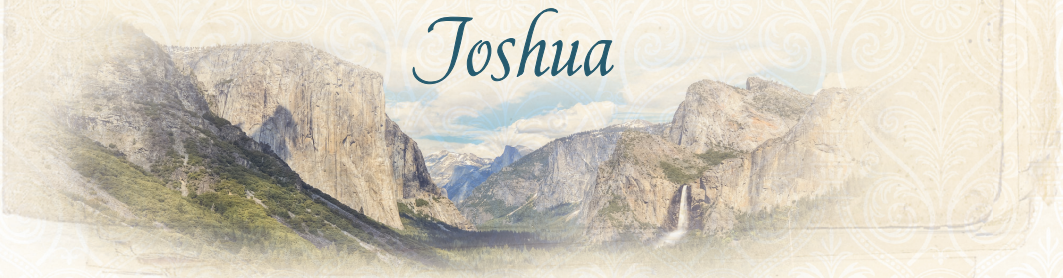
9Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

10But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, 11in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, 12and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

34:2 [a]That is, the Mediterranean

THE BOOK OF

Joshua



God's Commission to Joshua

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 2"Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. 3Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 5No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go."

The Order to Cross the Jordan

10Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11"Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'"

12And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, 13"Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' 14Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, 15until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He *gave* you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

16So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. 18Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."

Rahab Hides the Spies

2 Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove[a] to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho."

So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. 2And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

3So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab,

2:1 [a]Hebrew *Shittim*

saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

4Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they *were* from. 5And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." 6(But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) 7Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

8Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, 9and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11And as soon as we heard *these things,* our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He *is* God in heaven above and on earth beneath. 12Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, 13and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

14So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

15Then she let them down by a rope



BUDDY MULLINS • Homecoming Artist

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. | JOSHUA 1:7–9

I love this encouragement from God's Word. When my wife, Kerri, was diagnosed with cancer, these verses became life's breath to me, stating that we must stand and not turn in other directions, but trust His Word and hide it in our hearts. There is no need for fear, for our Father promises to walk right beside us. Stay facing forward with your eyes fixed on Christ. Our success is found in Him. I am so thankful He never leaves us. Though Kerri's battle with cancer has been won, these scriptures continue to be a guide through the unknown.



through the window, for her house *was* on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. [16]And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way."

[17]So the men said to her: "We *will be* blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, [18]unless, *when* we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. [19]So it shall be *that* whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood *shall be* on his own head, and we *will be* guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head if a hand is laid on him. [20]And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear."

[21]Then she said, "According to your words, so *be* it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

[22]They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought *them* all along the way, but did not find *them*. [23]So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. [24]And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

Israel Crosses the Jordan

3 Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove[a] and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over. [2]So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp; [3]and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. [4]Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed *this* way before."

[5]And Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." [6]Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people."

So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

[7]And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you. [8]You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.'"

[9]So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God." [10]And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: [11]Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. [12]Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. [13]And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, *that* the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap."

[14]So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, [15]and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), [16]that the waters which came down from upstream stood *still, and* rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that *is* beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed,

3:1 [a]Hebrew *Shittim*

and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. [17]Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

The Memorial Stones

4 And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying: [2]"Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, [3]and command them, saying, 'Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.'"

[4]Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; [5]and Joshua said to them: "Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, [6]that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones *mean* to you?' [7]Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

[8]And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the LORD had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. [9]Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day.

[10]So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua;



MARK LOWRY • Homecoming Artist, the *Gaither Vocal Band*

So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. . . . Then the woman took the two men and hid them. . . . and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land . . . for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. | JOSHUA 2:1–11

I love the story of Rahab. I guess part of the reason I love this story is because I like seeing how God has used messed up people to do amazing things. It gives me hope!

Rahab lived in Jericho and most Bible scholars agree that she was a prostitute. We know she was beautiful and we see in Joshua 2 that she is also a liar. I don't know any prostitutes personally, but I know a whole bunch of liars, and I doubt if one is a better sinner than the other. But do you want to know the real kicker? Rahab was one of Jesus' ancestors! Jesus had a prostitute in His family heritage! (You can see her name for yourself in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:5.) She is also listed in the "hall of faith"

and the people hurried and crossed over.
11 Then it came to pass, when all the people
had completely crossed over, that the ark of
the LORD and the priests crossed over in the
presence of the people. 12 And the men of
Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe
of Manasseh crossed over armed before
the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken
to them. 13 About forty thousand prepared
for war crossed over before the LORD for
battle, to the plains of Jericho. 14 On that
day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of
all Israel; and they feared him, as they had
feared Moses, all the days of his life.

15 Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, say-
ing, 16 "Command the priests who bear the
ark of the Testimony to come up from the
Jordan." 17 Joshua therefore commanded
the priests, saying, "Come up from the
Jordan." 18 And it came to pass, when the
priests who bore the ark of the covenant
of the LORD had come from the midst of
the Jordan, *and* the soles of the priests'
feet touched the dry land, that the waters
of the Jordan returned to their place and
overflowed all its banks as before.

19 Now the people came up from the
Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month,
and they camped in Gilgal on the east bor-
der of Jericho. 20 And those twelve stones
which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua
set up in Gilgal. 21 Then he spoke to the chil-
dren of Israel, saying: "When your children
ask their fathers in time to come, saying,
'What *are* these stones?' 22 then you shall let
your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed
over this Jordan on dry land'; 23 for the LORD
your God dried up the waters of the Jordan
before you until you had crossed over, as the
LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He
dried up before us until we had crossed over,
24 that all the peoples of the earth may know
the hand of the LORD, that it *is* mighty, that
you may fear the LORD your God forever."

The Second Generation Circumcised

5 So it was, when all the kings of the
Amorites who *were* on the west side of the
Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites
who *were* by the sea, heard that the LORD
had dried up the waters of the Jordan from
before the children of Israel until we[a] had

5:1 [a]Following Kethib; Qere, some Hebrew manuscripts and editions, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *they*.

in Hebrews 11 among people of outstanding faith. A harlot! How did she change the direction her life was headed? It's all in Joshua 2.

Why did she betray her own city to hide these foreign spies whom she had never even met? In Joshua 2:9–13, she tells the spies that her country is melting in fear because they have heard of Joshua's courage and all his conquests. Rahab knew all these incredible victories were not coincidental. She could see that God was with Joshua and his people, and she knew better than to mess with Him! So she switched sides—just like that!

When Joshua's army captured Jericho, Rahab and her parents and siblings were all spared. This prostitute, who may not have made a single good decision in her life up to that point, chose obedience that day. And that day was the beginning of a new course for her. Now, her life has become an example of courage and obedience for people like us generations later. Wow!

If we blow it a thousand times and then, just before we mess up one thousand one, we decide we don't want to get it wrong this time, God honors that obedience! We don't have to live on a sin default. Faith and obedience are momentary choices, not lifetime memberships. If you've been disobeying, you can switch sides just like Rahab! Aren't you glad?

crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.

2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time." 3 So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.[a] 4 And this *is* the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt *who were* males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. 5 For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. 6 For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people *who were* men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD—to whom the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, "a land flowing with milk and honey."[a] 7 Then Joshua circumcised their sons *whom* He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

8 So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. 9 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal[a] to this day.

10 Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. 12 Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

The Commander of the Army of the LORD

13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "*Are* You for us or for our adversaries?"

14 So He said, "No, but *as* Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

15 Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy." And Joshua did so.

The Destruction of Jericho

6 Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. 2 And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, *and* the mighty men of valor. 3 You shall march around the city, all *you* men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. 4 And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 It shall come to pass, when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him."

6 Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." 7 And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD."

8 So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9 The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. 10 Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I

5:3 [a]Hebrew *Gibeath Haaraloth* **5:6** [a]Exodus 3:8 **5:9** [a]Literally *Rolling*

say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout."
[11]So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around *it* once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.

[12]And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. [13]Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. [14]And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days.

[15]But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. [16]And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! [17]Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who *are* in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. [18]And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. [19]But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

[20]So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. [21]And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

[22]But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." [23]And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. [24]But they burned the city and all that *was* in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. [25]And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

[26]Then Joshua charged *them* at that time, saying, "Cursed *be* the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."

[27]So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

Defeat at Ai

7 But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi,[a] the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.

[2]Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. [3]And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for *the people of Ai are* few." [4]So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. [5]And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them *from* before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

[6]Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. [7]And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! [8]O Lord, what shall I say when

7:1 [a]Called *Zimri* in 1 Chronicles 2:6

Israel turns its back before its enemies?
9For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants
of the land will hear *it,* and surround us,
and cut off our name from the earth. Then
what will You do for Your great name?"

The Sin of Achan

10So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up!
Why do you lie thus on your face? 11Israel
has sinned, and they have also transgressed
My covenant which I commanded them. For
they have even taken some of the accursed
things, and have both stolen and deceived;
and they have also put *it* among their own
stuff. 12Therefore the children of Israel could
not stand before their enemies, *but* turned
their backs before their enemies, because
they have become doomed to destruction.
Neither will I be with you anymore, unless
you destroy the accursed from among
you. 13Get up, sanctify the people, and say,
'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because
thus says the LORD God of Israel: "*There is* an
accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you
cannot stand before your enemies until you
take away the accursed thing from among
you." 14In the morning therefore you shall be
brought according to your tribes. And it shall
be *that* the tribe which the LORD takes shall
come according to families; and the family
which the LORD takes shall come by house-
holds; and the household which the LORD
takes shall come man by man. 15Then it shall
be *that* he who is taken with the accursed
thing shall be burned with fire, he and all
that he has, because he has transgressed the
covenant of the LORD, and because he has
done a disgraceful thing in Israel.'"

16So Joshua rose early in the morning
and brought Israel by their tribes, and the
tribe of Judah was taken. 17He brought the
clan of Judah, and he took the family of the
Zarhites; and he brought the family of the
Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken.
18Then he brought his household man by
man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son
of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of
Judah, was taken.

19Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son,
I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of
Israel, and make confession to Him, and
tell me now what you have done; do not
hide *it* from me."

20And Achan answered Joshua and said,
"Indeed I have sinned against the LORD
God of Israel, and this is what I have done:
21When I saw among the spoils a beautiful
Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels
of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty
shekels, I coveted them and took them. And
there they are, hidden in the earth in the
midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

22So Joshua sent messengers, and they
ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden
in his tent, with the silver under it. 23And
they took them from the midst of the tent,
brought them to Joshua and to all the chil-
dren of Israel, and laid them out before
the LORD. 24Then Joshua, and all Israel with
him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the sil-
ver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his
sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys,
his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and
they brought them to the Valley of Achor.
25And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled
us? The LORD will trouble you this day."
So all Israel stoned him with stones; and
they burned them with fire after they had
stoned them with stones.

26Then they raised over him a great heap
of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD
turned from the fierceness of His anger.
Therefore the name of that place has been
called the Valley of Achor[a] to this day.

The Fall of Ai

8 Now the LORD said to Joshua: "Do not
be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the
people of war with you, and arise, go up to
Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king
of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. 2And
you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to
Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its
cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves.
Lay an ambush for the city behind it."

3So Joshua arose, and all the people of
war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose
thirty thousand mighty men of valor and
sent them away by night. 4And he com-
manded them, saying: "Behold, you shall
lie in ambush against the city, behind the
city. Do not go very far from the city, but all
of you be ready. 5Then I and all the people
who *are* with me will approach the city; and
it will come about, when they come out

7:26 [a]Literally *Trouble*

against us as at the first, that we shall flee before them. 6For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, 'They *are* fleeing before us as at the first.' Therefore we will flee before them. 7Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. 8And it will be, when you have taken the city, *that* you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the LORD you shall do. See, I have commanded you."

9Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people. 10Then Joshua rose up early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. 11And all the people of war who *were* with him went up and drew near; and they came before the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Now a valley *lay* between them and Ai. 12So he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. 13And when they had set the people, all the army that *was* on the north of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

14Now it happened, when the king of Ai saw *it,* that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. But he did not know that *there was* an ambush against him behind the city. 15And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. 16So all the people who *were* in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. 17There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel.

18Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that *is* in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the spear that *was* in his hand toward the city. 19So *those in* ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire. 20And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers.

21Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. 22Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were *caught* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape. 23But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

24And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. 25So it was *that* all who fell that day, both men and women, *were* twelve thousand—all the people of Ai. 26For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. 27Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua. 28So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. 29And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones *that remains* to this day.

Joshua Renews the Covenant

30Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal, 31as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: "an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron *tool.*"[a] And they offered on it burnt

8:31 [a]Deuteronomy 27:5, 6

offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. 32And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. 33Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them *were* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. 34And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. 35There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

The Treaty with the Gibeonites

9 And it came to pass when all the kings who *were* on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard *about it,* 2that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.

3But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, 5old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* moldy. 6And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us."

7Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?"

8But they said to Joshua, "We *are* your servants."

And Joshua said to them, "Who *are* you, and where do you come from?"

9So they said to him: "From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, 10and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. 11Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, "We *are* your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us." ' 12This bread of ours we took hot *for* our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. 13And these wineskins which we filled *were* new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey."

14Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. 15So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.

16And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbors who dwelt near them. 17Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. 18But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers.

19Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them. 20This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them." 21And the rulers said to them, "Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them."

22Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We *are* very far from

you,' when you dwell near us? 23Now therefore, you *are* cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves—woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

24So they answered Joshua and said, "Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. 25And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us." 26So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. 27And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.

The Sun Stands Still

10 Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king—and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, 2that they feared greatly, because Gibeon *was* a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it *was* greater than Ai, and all its men *were* mighty. 3Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, 4"Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel." 5Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.

6And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, "Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us."

7So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. 8And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you." 9Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. 10So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. 11And it happened, as they fled before Israel *and* were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. *There were* more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.

12Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel:

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon;
And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon."
13 So the sun stood still,
And the moon stopped,
Till the people had revenge
Upon their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day. 14And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

15Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

The Amorite Kings Executed

16But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah. 17And it was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah."

18So Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them. 19And do not stay *there* yourselves, *but* pursue your enemies, and attack their rear *guard*. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God

has delivered them into your hand." [20]Then it happened, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they had finished, that those who escaped entered fortified cities. [21]And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace.

No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

[22]Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave." [23]And they did so, and brought out those five kings to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.

[24]So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." And they drew near and put their feet on their necks. [25]Then Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight." [26]And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. [27]So it was at the time of the going down of the sun *that* Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

Conquest of the Southland

[28]On that day Joshua took Makkedah, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them[a]—all the people who *were* in it. He let none remain. He also did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

[29]Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah; and they fought against Libnah. [30]And the LORD also delivered it and its king into the hand of Israel; he struck it and all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword. He let none remain in it, but did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

[31]Then Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish; and they encamped against it and fought against it. [32]And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, who took it on the second day, and struck it and all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, according to all that he had done to Libnah. [33]Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua struck him and his people, until he left him none remaining.

[34]From Lachish Joshua passed to Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it and fought against it. [35]They took it on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword; all the people who *were* in it he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

[36]So Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, to Hebron; and they fought against it. [37]And they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword—its king, all its cities, and all the people who *were* in it; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon, but utterly destroyed it and all the people who *were* in it.

[38]Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and they fought against it. [39]And he took it and its king and all its cities; they struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed all the people who *were* in it. He left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and its king, as he had done also to Libnah and its king.

[40]So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South[a] and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded. [41]And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. [42]All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. [43]Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

10:28 [a]Following Masoretic Text and most authorities; many Hebrew manuscripts, some manuscripts of the Septuagint, and some manuscripts of the Targum read *it*. **10:40** [a]Hebrew *Negev*, and so throughout this book

The Northern Conquest

11 And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard *these things,* that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, 2and to the kings who *were* from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west, 3to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah. 4So they went out, they and all their armies with them, *as* many people *as* the sand that *is* on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. 5And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

6But the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." 7So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and they attacked them. 8And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth,[a] and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining. 9So Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

10Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. 11And they struck all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them.* There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire.

12So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. 13But *as for* the cities that stood on their mounds,[a] Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, *which* Joshua burned. 14And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none breathing. 15As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

Summary of Joshua's Conquests

16Thus Joshua took all this land: the mountain country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan plain[a]—the mountains of Israel and its lowlands, 17from Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings, and struck them down and killed them. 18Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. 19There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All *the others* they took in battle. 20For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, *and* that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

21And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. 22None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.

23So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.

The Kings Conquered by Moses

12 These *are* the kings of the land whom the children of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed on the other side of the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon, and all the eastern Jordan plain: 2*One king was* Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt

11:8 [a]Hebrew *Misrephoth Maim* **11:13** [a]Hebrew *tel,* a heap of successive city ruins **11:16** [a]Hebrew *arabah*

in Heshbon *and* ruled half of Gilead, from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, from the middle of that river, even as far as the River Jabbok, *which is* the border of the Ammonites, [3]and the eastern Jordan plain from the Sea of Chinneroth as far as the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), the road to Beth Jeshimoth, and southward below the slopes of Pisgah. [4]*The other king was* Og king of Bashan and his territory, *who was* of the remnant of the giants, who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, [5]and reigned over Mount Hermon, over Salcah, over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and over half of Gilead *to* the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

[6]These Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel had conquered; and Moses the servant of the LORD had given it *as* a possession to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

The Kings Conquered by Joshua

[7]And these *are* the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon as far as Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, which Joshua gave to the tribes of Israel *as* a possession according to their divisions, [8]in the mountain country, in the lowlands, in the *Jordan* plain, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the South—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: [9]the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which *is* beside Bethel, one; [10]the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; [11]the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; [12]the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; [13]the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; [14]the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; [15]the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; [16]the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; [17]the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one; [18]the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; [19]the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; [20]the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; [21]the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; [22]the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; [23]the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of the people of Gilgal, one; [24]the king of Tirzah, one—all the kings, thirty-one.

Remaining Land to Be Conquered

13 Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. [2]This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all *that of* the Geshurites, [3]from Sihor, which *is* east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (*which* is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines—the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites; [4]from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorites; [5]the land of the Gebalites,[a] and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath; [6]all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth,[a] *and* all the Sidonians—them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. [7]Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh."

The Land Divided East of the Jordan

[8]With the other half-tribe the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses had given them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the LORD had given them: [9]from Aroer which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and the town that *is* in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain of Medeba as far as Dibon; [10]all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon; [11]Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salcah; [12]all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for Moses had defeated and cast out these.

[13]Nevertheless the children of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the

13:5 [a]Or *Giblites* **13:6** [a]Hebrew *Misrephoth Maim*

Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.

[14]Only to the tribe of Levi he had given no inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire *are* their inheritance, as He said to them.

The Land of Reuben

[15]And Moses had given to the tribe of the children of Reuben *an inheritance* according to their families. [16]Their territory was from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain by Medeba; [17]Heshbon and all its cities that *are* in the plain: Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, [18]Jahaza, Kedemoth, Mephaath, [19]Kirjathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the mountain of the valley, [20]Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth— [21]all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses had struck with the princes of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, who *were* princes of Sihon dwelling in the country. [22]The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them. [23]And the border of the children of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages.

The Land of Gad

[24]Moses also had given *an inheritance* to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families. [25]Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which *is* before Rabbah, [26]and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir, [27]and in the valley Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as *its* border, as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth, on the other side of the Jordan eastward. [28]This *is* the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages.

Half the Tribe of Manasseh (East)

[29]Moses also had given *an inheritance* to half the tribe of Manasseh; it was for half the tribe of the children of Manasseh according to their families: [30]Their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, sixty cities; [31]half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, *were* for the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Machir according to their families.

[32]These *are the areas* which Moses had distributed as an inheritance in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward. [33]But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel *was* their inheritance, as He had said to them.

The Land Divided West of the Jordan

14 These *are the areas* which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them. [2]Their inheritance *was* by lot, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. [3]For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. [4]For the children of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell *in,* with their common-lands for their livestock and their property. [5]As the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.

Caleb Inherits Hebron

[6]Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. [7]I *was* forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land,

and I brought back word to him as *it was* in my heart. 8Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' 10And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. 11As yet I *am as* strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength *was* then, so now *is* my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. 12Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fortified. It may be that the LORD *will be* with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said."

13And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. 14Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. 15And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (*Arba was* the greatest man among the Anakim).

Then the land had rest from war.

The Land of Judah

15 So *this* was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families:

The border of Edom at the Wilderness of Zin southward *was* the extreme southern boundary. 2And their southern border began at the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward. 3Then it went out to the southern side of the Ascent of Akrabbim, passed along to Zin, ascended on the south side of Kadesh Barnea, passed along to Hezron, went up to Adar, and went around to Karkaa. 4*From there* it passed toward Azmon and went out to the Brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your southern border.

5The east border *was* the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan.

And the border on the northern quarter *began* at the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. 6The border went up to Beth Hoglah and passed north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. 7Then the border went up toward Debir from the Valley of Achor, and it turned northward toward Gilgal, which *is* before the Ascent of Adummim, which *is* on the south side of the valley. The border continued toward the waters of En Shemesh and ended at En Rogel. 8And the border went up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the southern slope of the Jebusite *city* (which *is* Jerusalem). The border went up to the top of the mountain that *lies* before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which *is* at the end of the Valley of Rephaim[a] northward. 9Then the border went around from the top of the hill to the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and extended to the cities of Mount Ephron. And the border went around to Baalah (which *is* Kirjath Jearim). 10Then the border turned westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, passed along to the side of Mount Jearim on the north (which *is* Chesalon), went down to Beth Shemesh, and passed on to Timnah. 11And the border went out to the side of Ekron northward. Then the border went around to Shicron, passed along to Mount Baalah, and extended to Jabneel; and the border ended at the sea.

12The west border *was* the coastline of the Great Sea. This *is* the boundary of the children of Judah all around according to their families.

Caleb Occupies Hebron and Debir

13Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, *namely,* Kirjath Arba, which *is* Hebron (*Arba was* the father of Anak). 14Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. 15Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir *was* Kirjath Sepher).

15:8 [a]Literally *Giants*

16And Caleb said, "He who attacks
Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give
Achsah my daughter as wife." 17So Othniel
the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took
it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as
wife. 18Now it was so, when she came *to him,*
that she persuaded him to ask her father for
a field. So she dismounted from *her* donkey,
and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"
19She answered, "Give me a blessing; since
you have given me land in the South, give
me also springs of water." So he gave her the
upper springs and the lower springs.

The Cities of Judah

20This *was* the inheritance of the tribe
of the children of Judah according to their
families:

21The cities at the limits of the tribe of
the children of Judah, toward the border
of Edom in the South, were Kabzeel, Eder,
Jagur, 22Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, 23Kedesh,
Hazor, Ithnan, 24Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25Ha-
zor, Hadattah, Kerioth, Hezron (which *is*
Hazor), 26Amam, Shema, Moladah, 27Hazar
Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, 28Hazar
Shual, Beersheba, Bizjothjah, 29Baalah, Ijim,
Ezem, 30Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah, 31Ziklag,
Madmannah, Sansannah, 32Lebaoth, Shil-
him, Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities *are*
twenty-nine, with their villages.

33In the lowland: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ash-
nah, 34Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah,
Enam, 35Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah,
36Sharaim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gedero-
thaim: fourteen cities with their villages;
37Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, 38Dilean,
Mizpah, Joktheel, 39Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon,
40Cabbon, Lahmas,[a] Kithlish, 41Gederoth,
Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: six-
teen cities with their villages; 42Libnah,
Ether, Ashan, 43Jiphtah, Ashnah, Nezib,
44Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities
with their villages; 45Ekron, with its towns
and villages; 46from Ekron to the sea, all
that *lay* near Ashdod, with their villages;
47Ashdod with its towns and villages, Gaza
with its towns and villages—as far as the
Brook of Egypt and the Great Sea with *its*
coastline.

48And in the mountain country: Shamir,
Jattir, Sochoh, 49Dannah, Kirjath Sannah
(which *is* Debir), 50Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim,
51Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities
with their villages; 52Arab, Dumah, Eshean,
53Janum, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, 54Humtah,
Kirjath Arba (which *is* Hebron), and Zior:
nine cities with their villages; 55Maon,
Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, 56Jezreel, Jokdeam,
Zanoah, 57Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten
cities with their villages; 58Halhul, Beth Zur,
Gedor, 59Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon:
six cities with their villages; 60Kirjath Baal
(which *is* Kirjath Jearim) and Rabbah: two
cities with their villages.

61In the wilderness: Beth Arabah, Middin,
Secacah, 62Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En
Gedi: six cities with their villages.

63As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants
of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could
not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell
with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to
this day.

Ephraim and West Manasseh

16 The lot fell to the children of Joseph
from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the
waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilder-
ness that goes up from Jericho through the
mountains to Bethel, 2then went out from
Bethel to Luz,[a] passed along to the border
of the Archites at Ataroth, 3and went down
westward to the boundary of the Japhletites,
as far as the boundary of Lower Beth Horon
to Gezer; and it ended at the sea.

4So the children of Joseph, Manasseh
and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

The Land of Ephraim

5The border of the children of Ephraim,
according to their families, was *thus:* The
border of their inheritance on the east
side was Ataroth Addar as far as Upper
Beth Horon.

6And the border went out toward the
sea on the north side of Michmethath;
then the border went around eastward to
Taanath Shiloh, and passed by it on the
east of Janohah. 7Then it went down from
Janohah to Ataroth and Naarah,[a] reached
to Jericho, and came out at the Jordan.

8The border went out from Tappuah
westward to the Brook Kanah, and it ended
at the sea. This *was* the inheritance of the

15:40 [a]Or *Lahmam* **16:2** [a]Septuagint reads *Bethel* (that is, Luz).
16:7 [a]Or *Naaran* (compare 1 Chronicles 7:28)

tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families. 9The separate cities for the children of Ephraim *were* among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

10And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.

The Other Half-Tribe of Manasseh (West)

17 There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he *was* the firstborn of Joseph: *namely* for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war; therefore he was given Gilead and Bashan. 2And there was *a lot* for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families: for the children of Abiezer,[a] the children of Helek, the children of Asriel, the children of Shechem, the children of Hepher, and the children of Shemida; these *were* the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families.

3But Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters. And these *are* the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 4And they came near before Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers." Therefore, according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers. 5Ten shares fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which *were* on the other side of the Jordan, 6because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

7And the territory of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethath, that *lies* east of Shechem; and the border went along south to the inhabitants of En Tappuah. 8Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh *belonged* to the children of Ephraim. 9And the border descended to the Brook Kanah, southward to the brook. These cities of Ephraim *are* among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh *was* on the north side of the brook; and it ended at the sea.

10Southward *it was* Ephraim's, northward *it was* Manasseh's, and the sea was its border. Manasseh's territory was adjoining Asher on the north and Issachar on the east. 11And in Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth Shean and its towns, Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns—three hilly regions. 12Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out *the inhabitants of* those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. 13And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.

More Land for Ephraim and Manasseh

14Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given us *only* one lot and one share to inherit, since we *are* a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?"

15So Joshua answered them, "If you *are* a great people, *then* go up to the forest *country* and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you."

16But the children of Joseph said, "The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, *both those* who *are* of Beth Shean and its towns and *those* who *are* of the Valley of Jezreel."

17And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, "You *are* a great people and have great power; you shall not have *only* one lot, 18but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it *is* wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots *and* are strong."

17:2 [a]Called *Jeezer* in Numbers 26:30

The Remainder of the Land Divided

18 Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them. 2But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance.

3Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: "How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers has given you? 4Pick out from among you three men for *each* tribe, and I will send them; they shall rise and go through the land, survey it according to their inheritance, and come *back* to me. 5And they shall divide it into seven parts. Judah shall remain in their territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north. 6You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring *the survey* here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. 7But the Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the LORD *is* their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them."

8Then the men arose to go away; and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, "Go, walk through the land, survey it, and come back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh." 9So the men went, passed through the land, and wrote the survey in a book in seven parts by cities; and they came to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. 10Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions.

The Land of Benjamin

11Now the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot came out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. 12Their border on the north side began at the Jordan, and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north, and went up through the mountains westward; it ended at the Wilderness of Beth Aven. 13The border went over from there toward Luz, to the side of Luz (which *is* Bethel) southward; and the border descended to Ataroth Addar, near the hill that *lies* on the south side of Lower Beth Horon.

14Then the border extended around the west side to the south, from the hill that *lies* before Beth Horon southward; and it ended at Kirjath Baal (which *is* Kirjath Jearim), a city of the children of Judah. This *was* the west side.

15The south side *began* at the end of Kirjath Jearim, and the border extended on the west and went out to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah. 16Then the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lies* before the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which *is* in the Valley of the Rephaim[a] on the north, descended to the Valley of Hinnom, to the side of the Jebusite *city* on the south, and descended to En Rogel. 17And it went around from the north, went out to En Shemesh, and extended toward Geliloth, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. 18Then it passed along toward the north side of Arabah,[a] and went down to Arabah. 19And the border passed along to the north side of Beth Hoglah; then the border ended at the north bay at the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan. This *was* the southern boundary.

20The Jordan was its border on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, according to its boundaries all around, according to their families.

21Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, 22Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, 23Avim, Parah, Ophrah, 24Chephar Haammoni, Ophni, and Gaba: twelve cities with their villages; 25Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, 26Mizpah, Chephirah, Mozah, 27Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, 28Zelah, Eleph, Jebus (which *is* Jerusalem), Gibeath, *and* Kirjath: fourteen cities with their villages. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

18:16 [a]Literally *Giants* **18:18** [a]Or *Beth Arabah* (compare 15:6 and 18:22)

Simeon's Inheritance with Judah

19 The second lot came out for Simeon,
for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. And their
inheritance was within the inheritance of
the children of Judah. 2They had in their
inheritance Beersheba (Sheba), Moladah,
3Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, 4Eltolad, Bethul,
Hormah, 5Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar
Susah, 6Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhen: thirteen cities and their villages; 7Ain, Rimmon,
Ether, and Ashan: four cities and their villages; 8and all the villages that *were* all
around these cities as far as Baalath Beer,
Ramah of the South. This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon
according to their families.

9The inheritance of the children of
Simeon *was included* in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children
of Judah was too much for them. Therefore
the children of Simeon had *their* inheritance within the inheritance of that people.

Music is hateful and intolerable to the devil. I truly believe, and do not mind saying, that there is no art like music, next to theology. It is the only art, next to theology, that can calm the agitations of the soul, which plainly shows that the devil, the source of anxiety and sadness, flees from the sound of music as he does from religious worship. That is why the Scriptures are full of psalms and hymns, in which praise is given to God. That is why, when we gather round God's throne in heaven, we shall sing His glory.

MARTIN LUTHER

The Land of Zebulun

10The third lot came out for the children
of Zebulun according to their families, and
the border of their inheritance was as far
as Sarid. 11Their border went toward the
west and to Maralah, went to Dabbasheth,
and extended along the brook that is east
of Jokneam. 12Then from Sarid it went eastward toward the sunrise along the border
of Chisloth Tabor, and went out toward
Daberath, bypassing Japhia. 13And from
there it passed along on the east of Gath
Hepher, toward Eth Kazin, and extended
to Rimmon, which borders on Neah.
14Then the border went around it on the
north side of Hannathon, and it ended in
the Valley of Jiphthah El. 15Included were
Kattath, Nahallal, Shimron, Idalah, and
Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages.
16This *was* the inheritance of the children
of Zebulun according to their families,
these cities with their villages.

The Land of Issachar

17The fourth lot came out to Issachar,
for the children of Issachar according to
their families. 18And their territory went to
Jezreel, and *included* Chesulloth, Shunem,
19Haphraim, Shion, Anaharath, 20Rabbith,
Kishion, Abez, 21Remeth, En Gannim, En
Haddah, and Beth Pazzez. 22And the border reached to Tabor, Shahazimah, and
Beth Shemesh; their border ended at the
Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages.
23This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of
the children of Issachar according to their
families, the cities and their villages.

The Land of Asher

24The fifth lot came out for the tribe of
the children of Asher according to their families. 25And their territory included Helkath,
Hali, Beten, Achshaph, 26Alammelech,
Amad, and Mishal; it reached to Mount
Carmel westward, along *the Brook* Shihor
Libnath. 27It turned toward the sunrise to
Beth Dagon; and it reached to Zebulun and
to the Valley of Jiphthah El, then northward
beyond Beth Emek and Neiel, bypassing
Cabul *which was* on the left, 28including
Ebron,[a] Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah, as far
as Greater Sidon. 29And the border turned
to Ramah and to the fortified city of Tyre;
then the border turned to Hosah, and
ended at the sea by the region of Achzib.
30Also Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob *were*

19:28 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; a few Hebrew manuscripts read *Abdon* (compare 21:30 and 1 Chronicles 6:74).

included: twenty-two cities with their villages. 31This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

The Land of Naphtali

32The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, for the children of Naphtali according to their families. 33And their border began at Heleph, enclosing the territory from the terebinth tree in Zaanannim, Adami Nekeb, and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum; it ended at the Jordan. 34From Heleph the border extended westward to Aznoth Tabor, and went out from there toward Hukkok; it adjoined Zebulun on the south side and Asher on the west side, and ended at Judah by the Jordan toward the sunrise. 35And the fortified cities *are* Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth, 36Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, 37Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, 38Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath, and Beth Shemesh: nineteen cities with their villages. 39This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

The Land of Dan

40The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. 41And the territory of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, 42Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah, 43Elon, Timnah, Ekron, 44Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, 45Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, 46Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the region near Joppa. 47And the border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father. 48This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

Joshua's Inheritance

49When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun. 50According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it.

51These *were* the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel divided as an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So they made an end of dividing the country.

The Cities of Refuge

20 The LORD also spoke to Joshua, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, 3that the slayer who kills a person accidentally *or* unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. 4And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. 5Then if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not deliver the slayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unintentionally, but did not hate him beforehand. 6And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.'"

7So they appointed Kedesh in Galilee, in the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and Kirjath Arba (which *is* Hebron) in the mountains of Judah. 8And on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. 9These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwelt among them, that whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.

Cities of the Levites

21 Then the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites came near to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the tribes of the children of Israel. 2And they spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The LORD commanded through Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock." 3So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their common-lands:

4Now the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. And the children of Aaron the priest, *who were* of the Levites, had thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah, from the tribe of Simeon, and from the tribe of Benjamin. 5The rest of the children of Kohath had ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.

6And the children of Gershon had thirteen cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

7The children of Merari according to their families had twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun.

8And the children of Israel gave these cities with their common-lands by lot to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses.

9So they gave from the tribe of the children of Judah and from the tribe of the children of Simeon these cities which are designated by name, 10which were for the children of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi; for the lot was theirs first. 11And they gave them Kirjath Arba (*Arba was* the father of Anak), which *is* Hebron, in the mountains of Judah, with the common-land surrounding it. 12But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.

13Thus to the children of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Libnah with its common-land, 14Jattir with its common-land, Eshtemoa with its common-land, 15Holon with its common-land, Debir with its common-land, 16Ain with its common-land, Juttah with its common-land, and Beth Shemesh with its common-land: nine cities from those two tribes; 17and from the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its common-land, Geba with its common-land, 18Anathoth with its common-land, and Almon with its common-land: four cities. 19All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, *were* thirteen cities with their common-lands.

20And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites, the rest of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot from the tribe of Ephraim. 21For they gave them Shechem with its common-land in the mountains of Ephraim (a city of refuge for the slayer), Gezer with its common-land, 22Kibzaim with its common-land, and Beth Horon with its common-land: four cities; 23and from the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with its common-land, Gibbethon with its common-land, 24Aijalon with its common-land, *and* Gath Rimmon with its common-land: four cities; 25and from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with its common-land and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: two cities. 26All the ten cities with their common-lands were for the rest of the families of the children of Kohath.

27Also to the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, from the *other* half-tribe of Manasseh, *they gave* Golan in Bashan with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), and Be Eshterah with its common-land: two cities; 28and from the tribe of Issachar, Kishion with its common-land, Daberath with its common-land, 29Jarmuth with its common-land, *and* En Gannim with its common-land: four cities; 30and from the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its common-land, Abdon with its common-land, 31Helkath with its common-land, and Rehob with its common-land: four cities; 32and from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Hammoth Dor with its common-land, and Kartan with its common-land: three cities. 33All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families *were* thirteen cities with their common-lands.



[34]And to the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its common-land, Kartah with its common-land, [35]Dimnah with its common-land, *and* Nahalal with its common-land: four cities; [36]and from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its common-land, Jahaz with its common-land, [37]Kedemoth with its common-land, and Mephaath with its common-land: four cities;[a] [38]and from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Mahanaim with its common-land, [39]Heshbon with its common-land, *and* Jazer with its common-land: four cities in all. [40]So all the cities for the children of Merari according to their families, the rest of the families of the Levites, were *by* their lot twelve cities.

[41]All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel *were* forty-eight cities with their common-lands. [42]Every one of these cities had its common-land surrounding it; thus *were* all these cities.

The Promise Fulfilled

[43]So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. [44]The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. [45]Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Eastern Tribes Return to Their Lands

22 Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, [2]and said to them: "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. [3]You have not left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. [4]And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents *and* to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. [5]But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." [6]So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

[7]Now to half the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the *other* half of it Joshua gave *a possession* among their brethren on this side of the Jordan, westward. And indeed, when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them, [8]and spoke to them, saying, "Return with much riches to your tents, with very much livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren."

[9]So the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go to the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they had obtained according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

An Altar by the Jordan

[10]And when they came to the region of the Jordan which *is* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great, impressive altar. [11]Now the children of Israel heard *someone* say, "Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel's side." [12]And when the children of Israel heard *of it,* the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.

[13]Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, [14]and with him ten

21:37 [a]Following Septuagint and Vulgate (compare 1 Chronicles 6:78, 79); Masoretic Text, Bomberg, and Targum omit verses 36 and 37.

rulers, one ruler each from the chief house of every tribe of Israel; and each one *was* the head of the house of his father among the divisions[a] of Israel. 15Then they came to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying, 16"Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD: 'What treachery *is* this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the LORD? 17*Is* the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed till this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, 18but that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? And it shall be, if you rebel today against the LORD, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. 19Nevertheless, if the land of your possession *is* unclean, *then* cross over to the land of the possession of the LORD, where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the LORD, nor rebel

22:14 [a]Literally *thousands*



MARK LOWRY • Homecoming Artist, the *Gaither Vocal Band*

You know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. | JOSHUA 23:14

Do you know how long Joshua lived? One hundred and ten years! I'm not even half that old yet and it takes me three times longer than it used to take for me to look like myself in the morning. I can't imagine living eleven decades! And just think, forty of his 110 years were spent wandering in the desert with a bunch of whining, ungrateful Israelites and eating the same thing every single day! If only reality TV cameras had been around back then so we could watch all the drama unfold! Joshua was the original survivor!

If I had been Joshua, all those years of wandering around in the desert would have brought up some serious questions:

"Is this *seriously* what God had in mind, or did I miss the boat somewhere?"

"We're eating *this* again?!"

"Am I a fool for believing that God is going to keep all these big promises He has made?"

Come to think of it, I've asked these questions in my own life at one time or another. I guess maybe we all want to be sure God is really, really going to be faithful when we know how weak we are.

Joshua was handpicked to succeed Moses. Handpicked by the God of the universe. Talk about some big sandals to fill! He was just as human as you and I, yet the entire Book of Joshua is a story about his courage, his faithfulness, and his ability to find God in the middle of what must've felt like utter insanity at times.

against us, by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God. [20]Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.'"

[21]Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions[a] of Israel: [22]"The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know—if *it is* in rebellion, or if in treachery against the LORD, do not save us this day. [23]If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the LORD Himself require *an account*. [24]But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, "What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel? [25]For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between you and us, *you* children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD." So your descendants would make

22:21 [a]Literally *thousands*

At the end of his 110 years, after leading the Israelites into the Promised Land, conquering Canaan, organizing and governing the people, he knew he was getting old and his job was about done. So he gave a farewell address. In the middle of that farewell address, in Joshua 23:14, he says to his people, "You know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed."

Not one single promise failed! I've never spent forty years in the wilderness with a bunch of weaklings, but I have spent a lot of time on a bus with a bunch of imperfect humans. And I have asked plenty of questions about how God can use people like us to carry on the work He started back in the Old Testament with people like Joshua. I love knowing that no matter how many questions we have or how many times we mess up, His promises are never going to change.

You know what? You've been handpicked for a unique purpose just like Joshua! We all have! If we're still breathing, we are here for a reason. And He has promised us that He will never leave us, that He will complete the work He has started in us and that His love will never end.

When I get to heaven, I can't wait to meet Joshua and hear his stories about surviving in the desert and leading those bratty Israelites to freedom. I wonder if He might enjoy hearing our stories, too, about how God still kept His promises in our lives thousands of years after he delivered that farewell address.

our descendants cease fearing the LORD.'
26Therefore we said, 'Let us now prepare
to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt
offering nor for sacrifice, 27but *that* it *may*
be a witness between you and us and our
generations after us, that we may perform
the service of the LORD before Him with
our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices,
and with our peace offerings; that your
descendants may not say to our descen-
dants in time to come, "You have no part
in the LORD." ' 28Therefore we said that it
will be, when they say *this* to us or to our
generations in time to come, that we may
say, 'Here is the replica of the altar of the
LORD which our fathers made, though not
for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but
it *is* a witness between you and us.' 29Far
be it from us that we should rebel against
the LORD, and turn from following the LORD
this day, to build an altar for burnt offer-
ings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices,
besides the altar of the LORD our God
which *is* before His tabernacle."

30Now when Phinehas the priest and
the rulers of the congregation, the heads
of the divisions[a] of Israel who *were* with
him, heard the words that the children
of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the
children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased
them. 31Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar
the priest said to the children of Reuben,
the children of Gad, and the children of
Manasseh, "This day we perceive that the
LORD *is* among us, because you have not
committed this treachery against the LORD.
Now you have delivered the children of
Israel out of the hand of the LORD."

32And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the
priest, and the rulers, returned from the
children of Reuben and the children of
Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land
of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and
brought back word to them. 33So the thing
pleased the children of Israel, and the
children of Israel blessed God; they spoke
no more of going against them in battle,

22:30 [a]Literally *thousands*



DEAN HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. | JOSHUA 24:15

A great friend and mentor once told me, "Life is made up of choices and relationships." Not only have I learned this through life experiences, but it has been confirmed by my study of God's Word.

In the beginning, Adam and Eve showed us the power of choice (Gen. 3). Before this so famous first sin, there was no wrong. The earth knew only good and peace; the first man and woman were perfect, and God was pleased. However, temptation entered by the Serpent, Eve and Adam sinned, and the result touched the whole human race. The very first humans had the choice between obedience and self-satisfaction. Rebellion overpowered the words spoken by the Almighty and this has affected us all.

Later in the Old Testament, Joshua told the people, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve" (Josh. 24:15). This mind-boggling and

to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

34 The children of Reuben and the children of Gad[a] called the altar, *Witness,* "For *it is* a witness between us that the LORD *is* God."

Joshua's Farewell Address

23 Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. 2 And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them:

"I am old, advanced in age. 3 You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God *is* He who has fought for you. 4 See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. 5 And the LORD your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you. 6 Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, 7 *and* lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause *anyone* to swear *by them;* you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, 8 but you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. 9 For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but *as for* you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. 10 One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God *is* He who fights for you, as He promised you. 11 Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. 12 Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make

22:34 [a] Septuagint adds *and half the tribe of Manasseh.*

wonderful offer to choose is given to us daily. Will we choose Jesus' offer of grace and answer, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"?

When we make a choice, we take a chance. It is impossible to choose without chance. Likewise, when we enter into a relationship, not only are we choosing and taking a chance, but we are also assuming inescapable responsibilities for those choices. These responsibilities are unavoidable because they are built directly into the relationship itself.

Choices are life-defining. What we choose gradually shapes who we are. This is the awesome freedom and responsibility of free will (choice) that God has given us. We actually *become* our choices. To study history is to become a historian; to play golf is to become a golfer; to preach is to become a preacher. Our legacy is the sum total of our choices.

Our choices shape our lives for good or bad. Choices are always easier to make than to unmake or remake because our choices don't just impact us but directly impact our relationships and everyone connected to us.

Choices and relationships are intertwined. Every choice and every relationship set a precedent for tomorrow's choices and relationships. In making our important decisions, wisdom is necessary—the kind of wisdom that is a gift from God given to those who ask. Let's seek the wisdom of God every day and live aware that there are no small decisions and no unimportant relationships.

marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, 13know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

14"Behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. 15Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. 16When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you."

The Covenant at Shechem

24 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. 2And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Your fathers, *including* Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River[a] in old times; and they served other gods. 3Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. 4To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. 5Also I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to what I did among them. Afterward I brought you out.

6'Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. 7So they cried out to the LORD; and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, brought the sea upon them, and covered them. And your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. Then you dwelt in the wilderness a long time. 8And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, and they fought with you. But I gave them into your hand, that you might possess their land, and I destroyed them from before you. 9Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. 10But I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he continued to bless you. So I delivered you out of his hand. 11Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you—*also* the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand. 12I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, *also* the two kings of the Amorites, *but* not with your sword or with your bow. 13I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'

14"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! 15And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

16So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; 17for the LORD our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. 18And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He *is* our God."

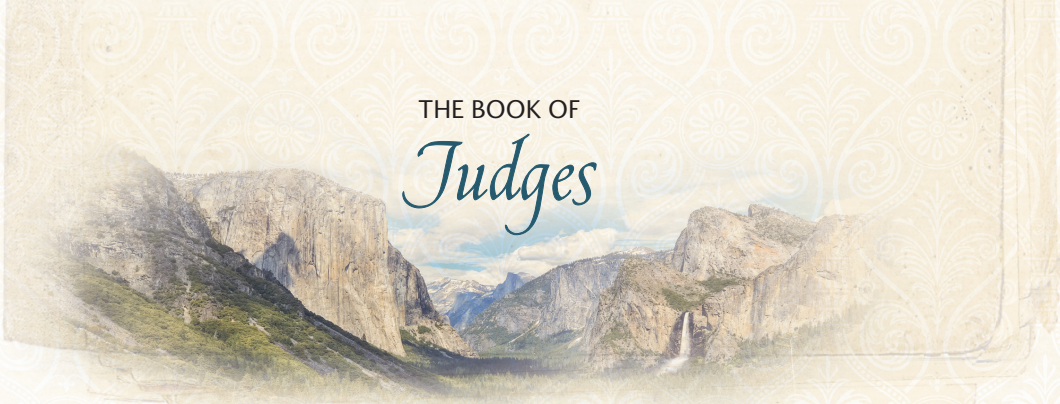
24:2 [a]Hebrew *Nahar,* the Euphrates, and so in verses 3, 14, and 15

19 But Joshua said to the people, "You
cannot serve the LORD, for He *is* a holy God.
He *is* a jealous God; He will not forgive
your transgressions nor your sins. 20 If you
forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods,
then He will turn and do you harm and
consume you, after He has done you good."
21 And the people said to Joshua, "No,
but we will serve the LORD!"
22 So Joshua said to the people, "You *are*
witnesses against yourselves that you have
chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve
Him."
And they said, "*We are* witnesses!"
23 "Now therefore," *he said,* "put away
the foreign gods which *are* among you,
and incline your heart to the LORD God of
Israel."
24 And the people said to Joshua, "The
LORD our God we will serve, and His voice
we will obey!"
25 So Joshua made a covenant with the
people that day, and made for them a stat-
ute and an ordinance in Shechem.
26 Then Joshua wrote these words in the
Book of the Law of God. And he took a large
stone, and set it up there under the oak
that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD. 27 And
Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this
stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard
all the words of the LORD which He spoke to
us. It shall therefore be a witness to you,
lest you deny your God." 28 So Joshua let the
people depart, each to his own inheritance.

Death of Joshua and Eleazar

29 Now it came to pass after these things
that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of
the LORD, died, *being* one hundred and ten
years old. 30 And they buried him within the
border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah,
which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, on
the north side of Mount Gaash.
31 Israel served the LORD all the days of
Joshua, and all the days of the elders who
outlived Joshua, who had known all the
works of the LORD which He had done for
Israel.
32 The bones of Joseph, which the chil-
dren of Israel had brought up out of Egypt,
they buried at Shechem, in the plot of
ground which Jacob had bought from the
sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for
one hundred pieces of silver, and which
had become an inheritance of the children
of Joseph.
33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died.
They buried him in a hill *belonging to* Phin-
ehas his son, which was given to him in the
mountains of Ephraim.





THE BOOK OF

Judges

The Continuing Conquest of Canaan

1 Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?"

2And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand."

3So Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with him. 4Then Judah went up, and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at Bezek. 5And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him; and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. 7And Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather *scraps* under my table; as I have done, so God has repaid me." Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

8Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire. 9And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains, in the South,[a] and in the lowland. 10Then Judah went against the Canaanites who dwelt in Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron *was* formerly Kirjath Arba.) And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

11From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. (The name of Debir *was* formerly Kirjath Sepher.)

12Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." 13And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife. 14Now it happened, when she came *to him*, that she urged him[a] to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from *her* donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" 15So she said to him, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water."

And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

16Now the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which *lies* in the South *near* Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people. 17And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah. 18Also Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory. 19So the LORD was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron. 20And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said. Then he expelled from there the three sons of Anak. 21But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

22And the house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the LORD *was* with them. 23So the house of Joseph sent men to spy out Bethel. (The name of the city *was* formerly Luz.) 24And when the spies saw a

1:9 [a]Hebrew *Negev,* and so throughout this book **1:14** [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *he urged her.*

man coming out of the city, they said to him, "Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will show you mercy." [25]So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword; but they let the man and all his family go. [26]And the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a city, and called its name Luz, which *is* its name to this day.

Incomplete Conquest of the Land

[27]However, Manasseh did not drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. [28]And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

[29]Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

[30]Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute.

[31]Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. [32]So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

[33]Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them.

[34]And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; [35]and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim;[a] yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute.

[36]Now the boundary of the Amorites *was* from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.

Israel's Disobedience

2 Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. [2]And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? [3]Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be *thorns* in your side,[a] and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" [4]So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.

[5]Then they called the name of that place Bochim;[a] and they sacrificed there to the LORD. [6]And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.

Death of Joshua

[7]So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. [8]Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died *when he was* one hundred and ten years old. [9]And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. [10]When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

Israel's Unfaithfulness

[11]Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; [12]and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. [13]They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.[a] [14]And the

1:35 [a]Spelled *Shaalabbin* in Joshua 19:42 **2:3** [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *enemies to you.* **2:5** [a]Literally *Weeping* **2:13** [a]Canaanite goddesses

anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

16Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. 18And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

20Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, 21I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them,* or not." 23Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

The Nations Remaining in the Land

3 Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, *that is,* all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2(*this was* only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3*namely,* five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4And they were *left, that He might* test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

5Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 6And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.

Othniel

7So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.[a] 8Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. 9When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. 11So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Ehud

12And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. 13Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms. 14So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.

15But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon

3:7 [a]Name or symbol for Canaanite goddesses

king of Moab. [16]Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh. [17]So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon *was* a very fat man.) [18]And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute. [19]But he himself turned back from the stone images that *were* at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king."

He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him.

[20]So Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." So he arose from *his* seat. [21]Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. [22]Even the hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and his entrails came out. [23]Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

[24]When he had gone out, *Eglon's*[a] servants came to look, and *to their* surprise, the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, "He is probably attending to his needs in the cool chamber." [25]So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the key and opened *them.* And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor.

[26]But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah. [27]And it happened, when he arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he led them. [28]Then he said to them, "Follow *me,* for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over. [29]And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all stout men of valor; not a man escaped. [30]So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

Shamgar

[31]After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.

Deborah

4 When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. [2]So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army *was* Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. [3]And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

[4]Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. [5]And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. [6]Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy *troops* at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; [7]and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?"

[8]And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"

[9]So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. [10]And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command,[a] and Deborah went up with him.

[11]Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which *is* beside Kedesh.

3:24 [a]Literally *his* **4:10** [a]Literally *at his feet*

12 And they reported to Sisera that Barak
the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount
Tabor. 13 So Sisera gathered together all his
chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron,
and all the people who *were* with him, from
Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.
14 Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For
this *is* the day in which the LORD has deliv-
ered Sisera into your hand. Has not the
LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went
down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand
men following him. 15 And the LORD routed
Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army
with the edge of the sword before Barak;

Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes!
I, even I, will sing to the LORD; I will sing
praise to the LORD God of Israel.
JUDGES 5:3

and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and
fled away on foot. 16 But Barak pursued the
chariots and the army as far as Harosheth
Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by
the edge of the sword; not a man was left.
17 However, Sisera had fled away on foot
to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the
Kenite; for *there was* peace between Jabin
king of Hazor and the house of Heber the
Kenite. 18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera,
and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn
aside to me; do not fear." And when he had
turned aside with her into the tent, she
covered him with a blanket.
19 Then he said to her, "Please give me a
little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she
opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and
covered him. 20 And he said to her, "Stand at
the door of the tent, and if any man comes
and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any
man here?' you shall say, 'No.'"
21 Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent
peg and took a hammer in her hand, and
went softly to him and drove the peg into
his temple, and it went down into the
ground; for he was fast asleep and weary.
So he died. 22 And then, as Barak pursued
Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said
to him, "Come, I will show you the man
whom you seek." And when he went into
her *tent,* there lay Sisera, dead with the peg



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

"Curse Meroz," said the angel of the LORD,
"Curse its inhabitants bitterly, because they did not
come to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD
against the mighty." | JUDGES 5:23

Deborah, in her song, captured a wonderful balance of truth that I have often neglected. We know the Lord is self-sufficient. It is absolute foolishness to think that God needs our help in anything. The idea is blasphemy! But here is a case when Meroz was cursed by God because "they did not come to the help of the LORD." There is a sense that God does need our help! He does not need our help because He cannot do it without us, but because He has chosen not to do it without us. I cannot do it alone; He will not do it alone; He has chosen that we, in union with Him, might accomplish His purposes. I want to live in cooperation with Him so that when He needs me, like He had need of the donkey that was tied to the tree (Matt. 21:2), I will be available.

in his temple.
23 So on that day God subdued Jabin
king of Canaan in the presence of the
children of Israel. 24 And the hand of the
children of Israel grew stronger and stron-
ger against Jabin king of Canaan, until
they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

The Song of Deborah

5 Then Deborah and Barak the son of
Abinoam sang on that day, saying:

2 "When leaders lead in Israel,
When the people willingly offer
themselves,
Bless the LORD!

3 "Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes!
I, *even* I, will sing to the LORD;
I will sing praise to the LORD God of
Israel.

4 "LORD, when You went out from Seir,
When You marched from the field of
Edom,
The earth trembled and the heavens
poured,
The clouds also poured water;
5 The mountains gushed before the LORD,
This Sinai, before the LORD God of
Israel.

6 "In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,
The highways were deserted,
And the travelers walked along the
byways.
7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Arose a mother in Israel.
8 They chose new gods;
Then *there was* war in the gates;
Not a shield or spear was seen among
forty thousand in Israel.
9 My heart *is* with the rulers of Israel
Who offered themselves willingly with
the people.
Bless the LORD!

10 "Speak, you who ride on white donkeys,
Who sit in judges' attire,
And who walk along the road.
11 Far from the noise of the archers,
among the watering places,
There they shall recount the righteous
acts of the LORD,
The righteous acts *for* His villagers in
Israel;
Then the people of the LORD shall go
down to the gates.

Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, sing a song!
JUDGES 5:12

12 "Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, sing a song!
Arise, Barak, and lead your captives
away,
O son of Abinoam!

13 "Then the survivors came down, the
people against the nobles;
The LORD came down for me against
the mighty.
14 From Ephraim *were* those whose roots
were in Amalek.
After you, Benjamin, with your peoples,
From Machir rulers came down,
And from Zebulun those who bear the
recruiter's staff.
15 And the princes of Issachar[a] *were* with
Deborah;
As Issachar, so *was* Barak
Sent into the valley under his
command;[b]
Among the divisions of Reuben
There were great resolves of heart.
16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks?
The divisions of Reuben have great
searchings of heart.
17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan,
And why did Dan remain on ships?[a]
Asher continued at the seashore,
And stayed by his inlets.
18 Zebulun *is* a people *who* jeopardized
their lives to the point of death,
Naphtali also, on the heights of the
battlefield.

19 "The kings came *and* fought,
Then the kings of Canaan fought

5:15 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *And my princes in Issachar.* [b]Literally *at his feet* **5:17** [a]Or *at ease*

In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;
They took no spoils of silver.
20 They fought from the heavens;
The stars from their courses fought
against Sisera.
21 The torrent of Kishon swept them
away,
That ancient torrent, the torrent of
Kishon.
O my soul, march on in strength!
22 Then the horses' hooves pounded,
The galloping, galloping of his steeds.
23 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel[a] of the
LORD,
'Curse its inhabitants bitterly,
Because they did not come to the help
of the LORD,
To the help of the LORD against the
mighty.'

24 "Most blessed among women is Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite;
Blessed is she among women in tents.
25 He asked for water, she gave milk;
She brought out cream in a lordly bowl.
26 She stretched her hand to the tent peg,
Her right hand to the workmen's
hammer;
She pounded Sisera, she pierced his
head,
She split and struck through his temple.
27 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still;
At her feet he sank, he fell;
Where he sank, there he fell dead.

28 "The mother of Sisera looked through
the window,
And cried out through the lattice,
'Why is his chariot *so* long in coming?
Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?'
29 Her wisest ladies answered her,
Yes, she answered herself,
30 'Are they not finding and dividing
the spoil:
To every man a girl *or* two;
For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments,
Plunder of garments embroidered and
dyed,
Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the
neck of the looter?'

31 "Thus let all Your enemies perish,
O LORD!
But *let* those who love Him *be* like
the sun
When it comes out in full strength."
So the land had rest for forty years.

Midianites Oppress Israel

6 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, 2and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which *are* in the mountains. 3So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. 4Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. 5For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. 6So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

7And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, 8that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; 9and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10Also I said to you, "I *am* the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.'"

Gideon

11Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which *was* in Ophrah, which *belonged* to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide *it* from the Midianites. 12And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD *is* with you, you mighty man of valor!"

5:23 [a]Or *Angel*

13 Gideon said to Him, "O my lord,[a] if
the LORD is with us, why then has all this
happened to us? And where *are* all His
miracles which our fathers told us about,
saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from
Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken
us and delivered us into the hands of the
Midianites."
14 Then the LORD turned to him and said,
"Go in this might of yours, and you shall
save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.
Have I not sent you?"
15 So he said to Him, "O my Lord,[a] how
can I save Israel? Indeed my clan *is* the
weakest in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in
my father's house."
16 And the LORD said to him, "Surely I
will be with you, and you shall defeat the
Midianites as one man."
17 Then he said to Him, "If now I have
found favor in Your sight, then show me a
sign that it is You who talk with me. 18 Do
not depart from here, I pray, until I come
to You and bring out my offering and set *it*
before You."
And He said, "I will wait until you come
back."
19 So Gideon went in and prepared a
young goat, and unleavened bread from an
ephah of flour. The meat he put in a bas-
ket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he
brought *them* out to Him under the tere-
binth tree and presented *them.* 20 The Angel
of God said to him, "Take the meat and the
unleavened bread and lay *them* on this rock,
and pour out the broth." And he did so.
21 Then the Angel of the LORD put out
the end of the staff that *was* in His hand,
and touched the meat and the unleavened
bread; and fire rose out of the rock and
consumed the meat and the unleavened
bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed
out of his sight.
22 Now Gideon perceived that He *was*
the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said,
"Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the
Angel of the LORD face to face."
23 Then the LORD said to him, "Peace *be*
with you; do not fear, you shall not die." 24 So
Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and
called it The-LORD-*Is*-Peace.[a] To this day it
is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
25 Now it came to pass the same night
that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's
young bull, the second bull of seven years
old, and tear down the altar of Baal that
your father has, and cut down the wooden
image[a] that *is* beside it; 26 and build an altar
to the LORD your God on top of this rock in
the proper arrangement, and take the sec-
ond bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with
the wood of the image which you shall cut
down." 27 So Gideon took ten men from
among his servants and did as the LORD
had said to him. But because he feared his
father's household and the men of the city
too much to do *it* by day, he did *it* by night.

Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal

28 And when the men of the city arose
early in the morning, there was the altar
of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image
that *was* beside it was cut down, and the
second bull was being offered on the altar
which had been built. 29 So they said to one
another, "Who has done this thing?" And
when they had inquired and asked, they
said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done
this thing." 30 Then the men of the city said
to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may
die, because he has torn down the altar
of Baal, and because he has cut down the
wooden image that *was* beside it."
31 But Joash said to all who stood against
him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you
save him? Let the one who would plead for
him be put to death by morning! If he *is* a
god, let him plead for himself, because his
altar has been torn down!" 32 Therefore on
that day he called him Jerubbaal,[a] saying,
"Let Baal plead against him, because he
has torn down his altar."
33 Then all the Midianites and Ama-
lekites, the people of the East, gathered
together; and they crossed over and
encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34 But the
Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then
he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites
gathered behind him. 35 And he sent mes-
sengers throughout all Manasseh, who also
gathered behind him. He also sent mes-
sengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali;
and they came up to meet them.

6:13 [a]Hebrew *adoni,* used of man **6:15** [a]Hebrew *Adonai,* used of God **6:24** [a]Hebrew *YHWH Shalom* **6:25** [a]Hebrew *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess **6:32** [a]Literally *Let Baal Plead*

The Sign of the Fleece

[36]So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said—
[37]look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." [38]And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. [39]Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." [40]And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

Gideon's Valiant Three Hundred

7 Then Jerubbaal (that *is,* Gideon) and all the people who *were* with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

[2]And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' [3]Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

[4]But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people *are* still *too* many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." [5]So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." [6]And



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant. | JUDGES 7:10

Should I put out a fleece to determine the will of God? Gideon put out a fleece and God honored it. The passage in Judges 7 follows the record of Gideon's fleece. After God had condescended to answer Gideon's request, Gideon still did not have peace about the will of God. The fleece did not give him the assurance he sought. God knew that Gideon was still fearful and that, in fact, he needed a sign. So God initiated and gave him a sign. The sign God gave that settled his fears on the level of earth seemed unlikely to bring peace. He was to sneak down into the enemy camp, hear a soldier tell of a dream he had of a cupcake rolling down the hill and demolishing the enemy camp. When Gideon overheard that dream and that the enemy interpreted it as a victory for Gideon, he bowed his head and worshiped. God gave him peace. I do not need to dictate a fleece to the Lord to discover His will. He knows if I need a sign. If I need a sign, He will provide it.

the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. 7Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place." 8So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all *the rest of* Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

9It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. 10But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 11and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who *were* in the camp. 12Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.

13And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: *To my* surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed."

14Then his companion answered and said, "This *is* nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

15And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." 16Then he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. 17And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: 18When I blow the trumpet, I and all who *are* with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, '*The sword of* the LORD and of Gideon!'"

19So Gideon and the hundred men who *were* with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that *were* in their hands. 20Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" 21And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. 22When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia,[a] toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

23And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

24Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. 25And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

Gideon Subdues the Midianites

8 Now the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?" And they reprimanded him sharply.

2So he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? *Is* not the gleaning *of the grapes* of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? 3God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian,

7:22 [a]Hebrew *Beth Shittah*

Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

4When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who *were* with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit. 5Then he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian."

6And the leaders of Succoth said, "*Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?"

7So Gideon said, "For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers!" 8Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. 9So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!"

10Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen. 11Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure. 12When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.

13Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres. 14And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the leaders of



MARK LOWRY • Homecoming Artist, the *Gaither Vocal Band*

And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." | JUDGES 7:15

The story of Gideon is one of those stories I wish I had been there to see for myself. It's better than fiction! No human could've come up with a story like this.

From everything we read in Judges, Gideon was a lot like many of us. He needed to know what was going to happen before it happened. His name means "mighty warrior" but it looks like to me he preferred to play it safe. When God told Gideon He wanted to use him to rescue Israel, Gideon wanted proof. His first sign was given by an angel, but he needed more proof. (More proof than an angel? What else did he need?)

He laid wool outside on the ground at night, and he told God that if He *really* wanted to use him to help rescue Israel, to make the wool wet with dew in the morning but keep the grass around it dry. Well, guess what? He woke up the next morning and the wool was so wet he could wring it out into a bowl, and the grass around it was completely dry! God communicated to Gideon through a piece of wool! I should've tried that when I first thought God was calling me to sing in the Gaither Vocal Band! I could've used Bill's hair!

Anyway, Gideon *still* wasn't satisfied! He asked God to keep the wool dry

Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.
15Then he came to the men of Succoth and
said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about
whom you ridiculed me, saying, 'Are the
hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your
hand, that we should give bread to your
weary men?'" 16And he took the elders of
the city, and thorns of the wilderness and
briers, and with them he taught the men of
Succoth. 17Then he tore down the tower of
Penuel and killed the men of the city.

18And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna,
"What kind of men *were they* whom you
killed at Tabor?"

So they answered, "As you *are,* so *were*
they; each one resembled the son of a king."

19Then he said, "They *were* my brothers,
the sons of my mother. *As* the LORD lives, if
you had let them live, I would not kill you."
20And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise,
kill them!" But the youth would not draw
his sword; for he was afraid, because he *was*
still a youth.

21So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise
yourself, and kill us; for as a man *is, so is* his
strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah
and Zalmunna, and took the crescent orna-
ments that *were* on their camels' necks.

Gideon's Ephod

22Then the men of Israel said to Gideon,
"Rule over us, both you and your son, and
your grandson also; for you have delivered
us from the hand of Midian."

23But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule
over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the
LORD shall rule over you." 24Then Gideon said
to them, "I would like to make a request of
you, that each of you would give me the ear-
rings from his plunder." For they had golden
earrings, because they *were* Ishmaelites.

25So they answered, "We will gladly give

the next night and make the ground all around it wet. God humored him and did exactly that. I guess since Gideon was going to be leading his army into an enemy camp, he wanted to make sure he was hearing God right. And who can blame him? Leadership is scary!

When he gathered his army, he sent messengers all over the place and gathered thousands of men to help him win the battle. He wanted to make sure his army was stronger than his enemies! But then, God told him to send everyone home who was afraid and didn't want to fight. So 22,000 men went home! He was left with 10,000 men. Then, God went on asking Gideon to test his men and be sure they were really fit for battle and, long story short, his mighty army that started off 32,000 men strong dwindled down to 300!

When the time came for Gideon and his little ensemble to approach the enemy camp, they came in the dark with trumpets, clay pots, and torches. (I would've guessed they might bring weapons, but no!) Gideon stationed his men throughout the camp, and then when he gave them the cue, they started blowing their trumpets, smashing their clay pots, waving their torches and shouting "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" The Midianites freaked out! They got so crazy that they turned on each other and started killing each other with their swords! Only God could have come up with that scheme!

I love that God forces us to trust Him. Well, I don't always love it. It's uncomfortable. But when we are most dependent on Him, we are reminded that He is the mighty One. He is the One winning our battles for us. I don't know about you, but that makes me sleep a lot better at night!

them." And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder. [26]Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred *shekels* of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which *were* on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that *were* around their camels' necks. [27]Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.

[28]Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.

Death of Gideon

[29]Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. [30]Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives. [31]And his concubine who *was* in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. [32]Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

[33]So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. [34]Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; [35]nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.

Abimelech's Conspiracy

9 Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's brothers, and spoke with them and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, [2]"Please speak in the hearing of all the men of Shechem: 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over you, or that one reign over you?' Remember that I *am* your own flesh and bone."

[3]And his mother's brothers spoke all these words concerning him in the hearing of all the men of Shechem; and their heart was inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother." [4]So they gave him seventy *shekels* of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, with which Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men; and they followed him. [5]Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, because he hid himself. [6]And all the men of Shechem gathered together, all of Beth Millo, and they went and made Abimelech king beside the terebinth tree at the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

The Parable of the Trees

[7]Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and cried out. And he said to them:

"Listen to me, you men of Shechem,
That God may listen to you!

[8] "The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them.
And they said to the olive tree,
'Reign over us!'
[9] But the olive tree said to them,
'Should I cease giving my oil,
With which they honor God and men,
And go to sway over trees?'

[10] "Then the trees said to the fig tree,
'You come *and* reign over us!'
[11] But the fig tree said to them,
'Should I cease my sweetness and my good fruit,
And go to sway over trees?'

[12] "Then the trees said to the vine,
'You come *and* reign over us!'
[13] But the vine said to them,
'Should I cease my new wine,
Which cheers *both* God and men,
And go to sway over trees?'

[14] "Then all the trees said to the bramble,
'You come *and* reign over us!'
[15] And the bramble said to the trees,
'If in truth you anoint me as king over you,
Then come *and* take shelter in my shade;
But if not, let fire come out of the bramble
And devour the cedars of Lebanon!'

16"Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and sincerity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him as he deserves— 17for my father fought for you, risked his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; 18but you have risen up against my father's house this day, and killed his seventy sons on one stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his female servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother— 19if then you have acted in truth and sincerity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, *then* rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you. 20"But if not, let fire come from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and Beth Millo; and let fire come from the men of Shechem and from Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!" 21And Jotham ran away and fled; and he went to Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

Downfall of Abimelech

22After Abimelech had reigned over Israel three years, 23God sent a spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, 24that the crime *done* to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be settled and their blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who aided him in the killing of his brothers. 25And the men of Shechem set men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way; and it was told Abimelech.

26Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem; and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. 27So they went out into the fields, and gathered *grapes* from their vineyards and trod *them,* and made merry. And they went into the house of their god, and ate and drank, and cursed Abimelech. 28Then Gaal the son of Ebed said, "Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we should serve him? *Is he* not the son of Jerubbaal, and *is not* Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; but why should we serve him? 29If only this people were under my authority![a] Then I would remove Abimelech." So he[b] said to Abimelech, "Increase your army and come out!"

30When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was aroused. 31And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, "Take note! Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem; and here they are, fortifying the city against you. 32Now therefore, get up by night, you and the people who *are* with you, and lie in wait in the field. 33And it shall be, as soon as the sun is up in the morning, *that* you shall rise early and rush upon the city; and *when* he and the people who are with him come out against you, you may then do to them as you find opportunity."

34So Abimelech and all the people who *were* with him rose by night, and lay in wait against Shechem in four companies. 35When Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance to the city gate, Abimelech and the people who *were* with him rose from lying in wait. 36And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!"

But Zebul said to him, "You see the shadows of the mountains as *if they were* men."

37So Gaal spoke again and said, "See, people are coming down from the center of the land, and another company is coming from the Diviners'[a] Terebinth Tree."

38Then Zebul said to him, "Where indeed *is* your mouth now, with which you said, 'Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?' *Are* not these the people whom you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with them now."

39So Gaal went out, leading the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. 40And Abimelech chased him, and he fled from him; and many fell wounded, to the *very* entrance of the gate. 41Then Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they would not dwell in Shechem.

42And it came about on the next day that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech. 43So he took his people, divided them into three companies, and lay in wait in the field. And he looked, and there were the people, coming out of the city; and he rose against them

9:29 [a]Literally *hand* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls read *they;* Septuagint reads *I.* **9:37** [a]Hebrew *Meonenim*

and attacked them. 44Then Abimelech and the company that *was* with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city; and the *other* two companies rushed upon all who *were* in the fields and killed them. 45So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; he took the city and killed the people who *were* in it; and he demolished the city and sowed it with salt.

46Now when all the men of the tower of Shechem had heard *that,* they entered the stronghold of the temple of the god Berith. 47And it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. 48Then Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who *were* with him. And Abimelech took an ax in his hand and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it and laid *it* on his shoulder; then he said to the people who were with him, "What you have seen me do, make haste *and* do as I *have done.*" 49So each of the people likewise cut down his own bough and followed Abimelech, put *them* against the stronghold, and set the stronghold on fire above them, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem died, about a thousand men and women.

50Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and he encamped against Thebez and took it. 51But there was a strong tower in the city, and all the men and women—all the people of the city—fled there and shut themselves in; then they went up to the top of the tower. 52So Abimelech came as far as the tower and fought against it; and he drew near the door of the tower to burn it with fire. 53But a certain woman dropped an upper millstone on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull. 54Then he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer, and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, 'A woman killed him.'" So his young man thrust him through, and he died. 55And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed, every man to his place.

56Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers. 57And all the evil of the men of Shechem God returned on their own heads, and on them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

Tola

10 After Abimelech there arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim. 2He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir.

Jair

3After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years. 4Now he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys; they also had thirty towns, which are called "Havoth Jair"[a] to this day, which *are* in the land of Gilead. 5And Jair died and was buried in Camon.

Israel Oppressed Again

6Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him. 7So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon. 8From that year they harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who *were* on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead. 9Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed.

10And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!"

11So the LORD said to the children of Israel, "*Did I* not *deliver you* from the Egyptians and from the Amorites and from the people of Ammon and from the Philistines? 12Also the Sidonians and Amalekites and Maonites[a] oppressed you; and you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hand. 13Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more. 14Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress."

10:4 [a]Literally *Towns of Jair* (compare Numbers 32:41 and Deuteronomy 3:14) **10:12** [a]Some Septuagint manuscripts read *Midianites.*

15And the children of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned! Do to us whatever
seems best to You; only deliver us this day,
we pray." 16So they put away the foreign
gods from among them and served the
LORD. And His soul could no longer endure
the misery of Israel.

17Then the people of Ammon gathered
together and encamped in Gilead. And the
children of Israel assembled together and
encamped in Mizpah. 18And the people,
the leaders of Gilead, said to one another,
"Who *is* the man who will begin the fight
against the people of Ammon? He shall be
head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

Jephthah

11 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was
a mighty man of valor, but he *was*
the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot
Jephthah. 2Gilead's wife bore sons; and
when his wife's sons grew up, they drove
Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall
have no inheritance in our father's house,
for you *are* the son of another woman."
3Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and
dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless
men banded together with Jephthah and
went out *raiding* with him.

4It came to pass after a time that the
people of Ammon made war against Israel.
5And so it was, when the people of Ammon
made war against Israel, that the elders of
Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land
of Tob. 6Then they said to Jephthah, "Come
and be our commander, that we may fight
against the people of Ammon."

7So Jephthah said to the elders of
Gilead, "Did you not hate me, and expel
me from my father's house? Why have you
come to me now when you are in distress?"

8And the elders of Gilead said to
Jephthah, "That is why we have turned again
to you now, that you may go with us and
fight against the people of Ammon, and be
our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

9So Jephthah said to the elders of
Gilead, "If you take me back home to fight
against the people of Ammon, and the LORD
delivers them to me, shall I be your head?"

10And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah,
"The LORD will be a witness between us, if we
do not do according to your words." 11Then
Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and
the people made him head and commander
over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words
before the LORD in Mizpah.

12Now Jephthah sent messengers to
the king of the people of Ammon, saying,
"What do you have against me, that you
have come to fight against me in my land?"

13And the king of the people of Ammon
answered the messengers of Jephthah,
"Because Israel took away my land when
they came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon
as far as the Jabbok, and to the Jordan. Now
therefore, restore those *lands* peaceably."

14So Jephthah again sent messengers to
the king of the people of Ammon, 15and said
to him, "Thus says Jephthah: 'Israel did not
take away the land of Moab, nor the land
of the people of Ammon; 16for when Israel
came up from Egypt, they walked through
the wilderness as far as the Red Sea and
came to Kadesh. 17Then Israel sent messen-
gers to the king of Edom, saying, "Please let
me pass through your land." But the king of
Edom would not heed. And in like manner
they sent to the king of Moab, but he would
not *consent*. So Israel remained in Kadesh.
18And they went along through the wilder-
ness and bypassed the land of Edom and the
land of Moab, came to the east side of the
land of Moab, and encamped on the other
side of the Arnon. But they did not enter
the border of Moab, for the Arnon *was* the
border of Moab. 19Then Israel sent messen-
gers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of
Heshbon; and Israel said to him, "Please let
us pass through your land into our place."
20But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass
through his territory. So Sihon gathered all
his people together, encamped in Jahaz, and
fought against Israel. 21And the LORD God of
Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into
the hand of Israel, and they defeated them.
Thus Israel gained possession of all the land
of the Amorites, who inhabited that country.
22They took possession of all the territory of
the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok
and from the wilderness to the Jordan.

23'And now the LORD God of Israel has
dispossessed the Amorites from before His
people Israel; should you then possess it?
24Will you not possess whatever Chemosh
your god gives you to possess? So whatever

the LORD our God takes possession of before us, we will possess. 25And now, *are* you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel? Did he ever fight against them? 26While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover *them* within that time? 27Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me. May the LORD, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.'" 28However, the king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him.

Jephthah's Vow and Victory

29Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced *toward* the people of Ammon. 30And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, 31then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

32So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the LORD delivered them into his hands. 33And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith—twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim,[a] with a very great slaughter. Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

Jephthah's Daughter

34When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; and she *was his* only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter. 35And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it."

36So she said to him, "My father, *if* you have given your word to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon." 37Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I."

38So he said, "Go." And he sent her away *for* two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains. 39And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man.

And it became a custom in Israel 40*that* the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

Jephthah's Conflict with Ephraim

12 Then the men of Ephraim gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, "Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you with fire!"

2And Jephthah said to them, "My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands. 3So when I saw that you would not deliver *me,* I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the LORD delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?" 4Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, "You Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites *and* among the Manassites." 5The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites *arrived.* And when *any* Ephraimite who escaped said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead would say to him, "*Are* you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No," 6then they would say to him, "Then say, 'Shibboleth'!" And he would say, "Sibboleth," for he could not pronounce *it* right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites.

11:33 [a]Literally *Plain of Vineyards*

7And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried among the cities of Gilead.

Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon

8After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. 9He had thirty sons. And he gave away thirty daughters in marriage, and brought in thirty daughters from elsewhere for his sons. He judged Israel seven years. 10Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem.

11After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years. 12And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

13After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. 14He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy young donkeys. He judged Israel eight years. 15Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites.

The Birth of Samson

13 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

2Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren and had no children. 3And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. 4Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or *similar* drink, and not to eat anything unclean. 5For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

6So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance *was* like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He *was* from, and He did not tell me His name. 7And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'"

8Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."

9And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband *was* not with her. 10Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the *other* day has just now appeared to me!"

11So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?"

And He said, "I *am*."

12Manoah said, "Now let Your words come *to pass!* What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"

13So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. 14She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."

15Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You."

16And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD." (For Manoah did not know He *was* the Angel of the LORD.)

17Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "What *is* Your name, that when Your words come *to pass* we may honor You?"

18And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it *is* wonderful?"

19So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on— 20it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw *this,* they fell on their faces to the ground. 21When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to

Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He *was* the Angel of the LORD.

22And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!"

23But his wife said to him, "If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these *things,* nor would He have told us *such things* as these at this time."

24So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. 25And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan[a] between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson's Philistine Wife

14 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."

3Then his father and mother said to him, "*Is there* no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?"

And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well."

4But his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.

Now *to his* surprise, a young lion *came* roaring against him. 6And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though *he had* nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

7Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. 8After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey *were* in the carcass of the lion. 9He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave *some* to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

10So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. 11And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. 13But if you cannot explain *it* to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing."

And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."

14So he said to them:

"Out of the eater came something to eat,
And out of the strong came something sweet."

Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.

15But it came to pass on the seventh[a] day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? *Is that* not *so?*"

16Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained *it* to me."

And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained *it* to my father or my mother; so should I explain *it* to you?" 17Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people. 18So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down:

13:25 [a]Literally *Camp of Dan* (compare 18:12) **14:15** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *fourth.*

"What *is* sweeter than honey?
And what *is* stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them:

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
You would not have solved my riddle!"

19Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes *of clothing* to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. 20And Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, who had been his best man.

Samson Defeats the Philistines

15 After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into *her* room." But her father would not permit him to go in.

2Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. *Is* not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead."

3And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!" 4Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned *the foxes* tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5When he had set the torches on fire, he let *the foxes* go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards *and* olive groves.

6Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?"

And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

7Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." 8So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

9Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. 10And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?"

So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us."

11Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What *is* this you have done to us?"

And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

12But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines."

Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves."

13So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

14When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that *were* on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands. 15He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. 16Then Samson said:

"With the jawbone of a donkey,
Heaps upon heaps,
With the jawbone of a donkey
I have slain a thousand men!"

17And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.[a]

18Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the LORD and said, "You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" 19So God split the hollow place that *is* in Lehi,[a] and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En

15:17 [a]Literally *Jawbone Height* **15:19** [a]Literally *Jawbone* (compare verse 14) [b]Literally *Spring of the Caller*

Hakkore,[b] which is in Lehi to this day.
[20]And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Samson and Delilah

16 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.
[2]*When* the Gazites *were told,* "Samson has come here!" they surrounded *the place* and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him." [3]And Samson lay *low* till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put *them* on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

[4]Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah. [5]And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him, and find out where his great strength *lies,* and by what *means* we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver."

[6]So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength *lies,* and with what you may be bound to afflict you."

[7]And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man."

[8]So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them.
[9]Now *men were* lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

[10]Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with."

[11]So he said to her, "If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man."

[12]Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" And *men were* lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.

[13]Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with."

And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom"—

[14]So she wove *it* tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

[15]Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart *is* not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength *lies.*" [16]And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, *so* that his soul was vexed to death, [17]that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I *have been* a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man."

[18]When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart." So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand.
[19]Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him,[a] and his strength left him.
[20]And she said, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

[21]Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.
[22]However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.

Samson Dies with the Philistines

[23]Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to

16:19 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *he began to be weak.*

Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said:

"Our god has delivered into our hands
Samson our enemy!"

24When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said:

"Our god has delivered into our hands
our enemy,
The destroyer of our land,
And the one who multiplied our dead."

25So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may perform for us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars. 26Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them." 27Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines *were* there—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.

28Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one *blow* take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!" 29And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. 30Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with *all his* might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who *were* in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.

31And his brothers and all his father's household came down and took him, and brought *him* up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years.

Micah's Idolatry

17 Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim, whose name *was* Micah. 2And he said to his mother, "The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from you, and on which you put a curse, even saying it in my ears—here *is* the silver with me; I took it."

And his mother said, "*May you be* blessed by the LORD, my son!" 3So when he had returned the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, "I had wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the LORD for my son, to make a carved image and a molded image; now therefore, I will return it to you." 4Thus he returned the silver to his mother. Then his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver and gave them to the silversmith, and he made it into a carved image and a molded image; and they were in the house of Micah.

5The man Micah had a shrine, and made an ephod and household idols;[a] and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. 6In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

7Now there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah; he *was* a Levite, and was staying there. 8The man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find *a place*. Then he came to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. 9And Micah said to him, "Where do you come from?"

So he said to him, "I *am* a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am on my way to find *a place* to stay."

10Micah said to him, "Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten *shekels* of silver per year, a suit of clothes, and your sustenance." So the Levite went in. 11Then the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man became like one of his sons to him. 12So Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and lived in the house of Micah. 13Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!"

The Danites Adopt Micah's Idolatry

18 In those days *there was* no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day *their*

17:5 [a]Hebrew *teraphim*

inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them. 2So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it. They said to them, "Go, search the land." So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. 3While they *were* at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. They turned aside and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this *place?* What do you have here?"

4He said to them, "Thus and so Micah did for me. He has hired me, and I have become his priest."

5So they said to him, "Please inquire of God, that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous."

6And the priest said to them, "Go in peace. The presence of the LORD *be* with you on your way."

7So the five men departed and went to Laish. They saw the people who *were* there, how they dwelt safely, in the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure. *There were* no rulers in the land who might put *them* to shame for anything. They *were* far from the Sidonians, and they had no ties with anyone.[a]

8Then *the spies* came back to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brethren said to them, "What *is* your *report?*"

9So they said, "Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it *is* very good. *Would* you *do* nothing? Do not hesitate to go, *and* enter to possess the land. 10When you go, you will come to a secure people and a large land. For God has given it into your hands, a place where *there is* no lack of anything that *is* on the earth."

11And six hundred men of the family of the Danites went from there, from Zorah and Eshtaol, armed with weapons of war. 12Then they went up and encamped in Kirjath Jearim in Judah. (Therefore they call that place Mahaneh Dan[a] to this day. There *it is,* west of Kirjath Jearim.) 13And they passed from there to the mountains of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.

14Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish answered and said to their brethren, "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image? Now therefore, consider what you should do." 15So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man—to the house of Micah—and greeted him. 16The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who *were* of the children of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate. 17Then the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up. Entering there, they took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image. The priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men *who were* armed with weapons of war.

18When these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

19And they said to him, "Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us. *Is it* better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?" 20So the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people.

21Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones, the livestock, and the goods in front of them. 22When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who *were* in the houses near Micah's house gathered together and overtook the children of Dan. 23And they called out to the children of Dan. So they turned around and said to Micah, "What ails you, that you have gathered such a company?"

24So he said, "You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away. Now what more do I have? How can you say to me, 'What ails you?'"

25And the children of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry men fall upon you, and you lose your life, with the lives of your household!" 26Then the children of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they *were* too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.

18:7 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *with Syria.* **18:12** [a]Literally *Camp of Dan*

Danites Settle in Laish

27So they took *the things* Micah had
made, and the priest who had belonged to
him, and went to Laish, to a people quiet
and secure; and they struck them with the
edge of the sword and burned the city with
fire. 28*There was* no deliverer, because it *was*
far from Sidon, and they had no ties with
anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to
Beth Rehob. So they rebuilt the city and
dwelt there. 29And they called the name of
the city Dan, after the name of Dan their
father, who was born to Israel. However,
the name of the city formerly *was* Laish.

30Then the children of Dan set up for
themselves the carved image; and Jonathan
the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh,[a]
and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan
until the day of the captivity of the land.
31So they set up for themselves Micah's
carved image which he made, all the time
that the house of God was in Shiloh.

The Levite's Concubine

19 And it came to pass in those days,
when *there was* no king in Israel, that
there was a certain Levite staying in the
remote mountains of Ephraim. He took
for himself a concubine from Bethlehem
in Judah. 2But his concubine played the
harlot against him, and went away from
him to her father's house at Bethlehem in
Judah, and was there four whole months.
3Then her husband arose and went after
her, to speak kindly to her *and* bring her
back, having his servant and a couple of
donkeys with him. So she brought him into
her father's house; and when the father of
the young woman saw him, he was glad
to meet him. 4Now his father-in-law, the
young woman's father, detained him; and
he stayed with him three days. So they ate
and drank and lodged there.

5Then it came to pass on the fourth day
that they arose early in the morning, and
he stood to depart; but the young woman's
father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your
heart with a morsel of bread, and after-
ward go your way."

6So they sat down, and the two of them
ate and drank together. Then the young
woman's father said to the man, "Please be
content to stay all night, and let your heart
be merry." 7And when the man stood to
depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he
lodged there again. 8Then he arose early
in the morning on the fifth day to depart,
but the young woman's father said, "Please
refresh your heart." So they delayed until
afternoon; and both of them ate.

9And when the man stood to depart—he
and his concubine and his servant—his
father-in-law, the young woman's father,
said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing
toward evening; please spend the night.
See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here,
that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go
your way early, so that you may get home."

10However, the man was not willing to
spend that night; so he rose and departed,
and came opposite Jebus (that *is,* Jerusalem).
With him were the two saddled donkeys;
his concubine *was* also with him. 11They
were near Jebus, and the day was far spent;
and the servant said to his master, "Come,
please, and let us turn aside into this city of
the Jebusites and lodge in it."

12But his master said to him, "We will
not turn aside here into a city of foreign-
ers, who *are* not of the children of Israel;
we will go on to Gibeah." 13So he said to
his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one
of these places, and spend the night in
Gibeah or in Ramah." 14And they passed by
and went their way; and the sun went down
on them near Gibeah, which belongs to
Benjamin. 15They turned aside there to go
in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went
in, he sat down in the open square of the
city, for no one would take them into *his*
house to spend the night.

16Just then an old man came in from his
work in the field at evening, who also *was*
from the mountains of Ephraim; he was stay-
ing in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place
were Benjamites. 17And when he raised his
eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square
of the city; and the old man said, "Where are
you going, and where do you come from?"

18So he said to him, "We *are* passing from
Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote
mountains of Ephraim; I *am* from there.
I went to Bethlehem in Judah; *now* I am
going to the house of the LORD. But there

18:30 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Moses.*

is no one who will take me into his house,
19although we have both straw and fodder
for our donkeys, and bread and wine for
myself, for your female servant, and for the
young man *who is* with your servant; *there is*
no lack of anything."
20And the old man said, "Peace *be* with
you! However, *let* all your needs *be* my
responsibility; only do not spend the night
in the open square." 21So he brought him
into his house, and gave fodder to the don-
keys. And they washed their feet, and ate
and drank.

Gibeah's Crime

22As they were enjoying themselves,
suddenly certain men of the city, perverted
men,[a] surrounded the house *and* beat on
the door. They spoke to the master of the
house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the
man who came to your house, that we may
know him *carnally!*"
23But the man, the master of the house,
went out to them and said to them, "No, my
brethren! I beg you, do not act *so* wickedly!
Seeing this man has come into my house,
do not commit this outrage. 24Look, *here is*
my virgin daughter and *the man's*[a] concu-
bine; let me bring them out now. Humble
them, and do with them as you please; but
to this man do not do such a vile thing!"
25But the men would not heed him. So the
man took his concubine and brought *her*
out to them. And they knew her and abused
her all night until morning; and when the
day began to break, they let her go.
26Then the woman came as the day was
dawning, and fell down at the door of the
man's house where her master *was,* till it
was light.
27When her master arose in the morn-
ing, and opened the doors of the house
and went out to go his way, there was his
concubine, fallen *at* the door of the house
with her hands on the threshold. 28And he
said to her, "Get up and let us be going."
But there was no answer. So the man lifted
her onto the donkey; and the man got up
and went to his place.
29When he entered his house he took
a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and
divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb,[a]
and sent her throughout all the territory
of Israel. 30And so it was that all who saw it
said, "No such deed has been done or seen
from the day that the children of Israel came
up from the land of Egypt until this day.
Consider it, confer, and speak up!"

Israel's War with the Benjamites

20 So all the children of Israel came
out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well
as from the land of Gilead, and the con-
gregation gathered together as one man
before the LORD at Mizpah. 2And the lead-
ers of all the people, all the tribes of Israel,
presented themselves in the assembly of
the people of God, four hundred thousand
foot soldiers who drew the sword. 3(Now
the children of Benjamin heard that the
children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.)
Then the children of Israel said, "Tell
us, how did this wicked deed happen?"
4So the Levite, the husband of the
woman who was murdered, answered
and said, "My concubine and I went into
Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to
spend the night. 5And the men of Gibeah
rose against me, and surrounded the house
at night because of me. They intended to
kill me, but instead they ravished my con-
cubine so that she died. 6So I took hold
of my concubine, cut her in pieces, and
sent her throughout all the territory of
the inheritance of Israel, because they
committed lewdness and outrage in Israel.
7Look! All of you *are* children of Israel; give
your advice and counsel here and now!"
8So all the people arose as one man, say-
ing, "None *of us* will go to his tent, nor will
any turn back to his house; 9but now this
is the thing which we will do to Gibeah:
We will go up against it by lot. 10We will take
ten men out of *every* hundred throughout
all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of
every thousand, and a thousand out of *every*
ten thousand, to make provisions for the
people, that when they come to Gibeah in
Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness
that they have done in Israel." 11So all the
men of Israel were gathered against the
city, united together as one man.
12Then the tribes of Israel sent men
through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying,

19:22 [a]Literally *sons of Belial* **19:24** [a]Literally *his* **19:29** [a]Literally *with her bones*

"What *is* this wickedness that has occurred among you? 13Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men[a] who *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!" But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel. 14Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel. 15And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men. 16Among all this people *were* seven hundred select men *who were* left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's *breadth* and not miss. 17Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these *were* men of war.

18Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God[a] to inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?"

The LORD said, "Judah first!"

19So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped against Gibeah. 20And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah. 21Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites. 22And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day. 23Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, "Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?"

And the LORD said, "Go up against him."

24So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day. 25And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of the children of Israel; all these drew the sword.

26Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God[a] and wept. They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD (the ark of the covenant of God *was* there in those days, 28and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?"

And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand."

29Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah. 30And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in battle array against Gibeah as at the other times. 31So the children of Benjamin went out against the people, *and* were drawn away from the city. They began to strike down *and* kill some of the people, as at the other times, in the highways (one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah) and in the field, about thirty men of Israel. 32And the children of Benjamin said, "They *are* defeated before us, as at first."

But the children of Israel said, "Let us flee and draw them away from the city to the highways." 33So all the men of Israel rose from their place and put themselves in battle array at Baal Tamar. Then Israel's men in ambush burst forth from their position in the plain of Geba. 34And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce. But *the Benjamites*[a] did not know that disaster *was* upon them. 35The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel. And the children of Israel destroyed that day twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites; all these drew the sword.

36So the children of Benjamin saw that they were defeated. The men of Israel had given ground to the Benjamites, because they relied on the men in ambush whom they had set against Gibeah. 37And the men in ambush quickly rushed upon Gibeah; the men in ambush spread out and struck the whole city with the edge of the sword. 38Now the appointed signal between the

20:13 [a]Literally *sons of Belial* **20:18** [a]Or *Bethel*
20:26 [a]Or *Bethel* **20:34** [a]Literally *they*

men of Israel and the men in ambush was that they would make a great cloud of smoke rise up from the city, [39]whereupon the men of Israel would turn in battle. Now Benjamin had begun to strike *and* kill about thirty of the men of Israel. For they said, "Surely they are defeated before us, as *in* the first battle." [40]But when the cloud began to rise from the city in a column of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and there was the whole city going up *in smoke* to heaven. [41]And when the men of Israel turned back, the men of Benjamin panicked, for they saw that disaster had come upon them. [42]Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Israel in the direction of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them, and whoever *came* out of the cities they destroyed in their midst. [43]They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them, *and* easily trampled them down as far as the front of Gibeah toward the east. [44]And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell; all these *were* men of valor. [45]Then they[a] turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon; and they cut down five thousand of them on the highways. Then they pursued them relentlessly up to Gidom, and killed two thousand of them. [46]So all who fell of Benjamin that day were twenty-five thousand men who drew the sword; all these *were* men of valor.

[47]But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months. [48]And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from *every* city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to.

Wives Provided for the Benjamites

21 Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife." [2]Then the people came to the house of God,[a] and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly, [3]and said, "O LORD God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that today there should be one tribe *missing* in Israel?"

[4]So it was, on the next morning, that the people rose early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. [5]The children of Israel said, "Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the LORD?" For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the LORD at Mizpah, saying, "He shall surely be put to death." [6]And the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin their brother, and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel today. [7]What shall we do for wives for those who remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them our daughters as wives?"

[8]And they said, "What one *is there* from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?" And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly. [9]For when the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead *was* there. [10]So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand of their most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, "Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children. [11]And this *is* the thing that you shall do: You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately." [12]So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

[13]Then the whole congregation sent *word* to the children of Benjamin who *were* at the rock of Rimmon, and announced peace to them. [14]So Benjamin came back at that time, and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh Gilead; and yet they had not found enough for them.

[15]And the people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a void in the tribes of Israel.

[16]Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who remain, since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?" [17]And they said, "*There must be* an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe may not be destroyed from Israel. [18]However, we cannot give them wives from our daughters, for the

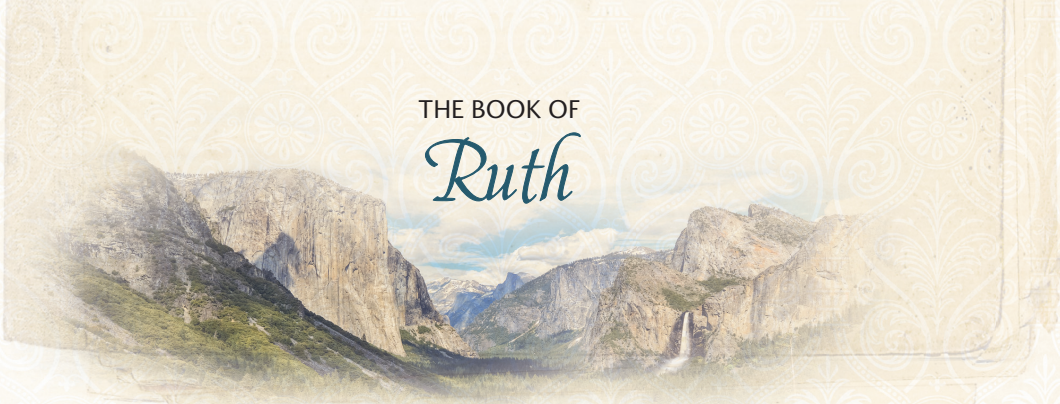
20:45 [a]Septuagint reads *the rest.* **21:2** [a]Or *Bethel*

children of Israel have sworn an oath, saying, 'Cursed *be* the one who gives a wife to Benjamin.'" [19]Then they said, "In fact, *there is* a yearly feast of the LORD in Shiloh, which *is* north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah."

[20]Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, "Go, lie in wait in the vineyards, [21]and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin. [22]Then it shall be, when their fathers or their brothers come to us to complain, that we will say to them, 'Be kind to them for our sakes, because we did not take a wife for any of them in the war; for *it is* not *as though* you have given the *women* to them at this time, making yourselves guilty of your oath.'"

[23]And the children of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they caught. Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and they rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them. [24]So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance.

[25]In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.



THE BOOK OF

Ruth

Elimelech's Family Goes to Moab

1 Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 2The name of the man *was* Elimelech, the name of his wife *was* Naomi, and the names of his two sons *were* Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. 3Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. 5Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

Naomi Returns with Ruth

6Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. 7Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. 8And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband."

So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. 10And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."

11But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? *Are* there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, *if* I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, 13would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!"

14Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

16But Ruth said:

"Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people *shall be* my people,
And your God, my God.
17 Where you die, I will die,
And there will I be buried.
The LORD do so to me, and more also,
If *anything but* death parts you and me."

18When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

19Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "*Is* this Naomi?"

20But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi;[a] call me Mara,[b] for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

22So Naomi returned, and Ruth the

1:20 [a]Literally *Pleasant* [b]Literally *Bitter*

Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Ruth Meets Boaz

2 There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name *was* Boaz.
2So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after *him* in whose sight I may find favor."

And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."
3Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field *belonging* to Boaz, who *was* of the family of Elimelech.
4Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD *be* with you!"

And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!"
5Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman *is* this?"
6So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It *is* the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."
8Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. 9*Let* your eyes *be* on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."
10So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?"

Music is the art of the prophets; the only art that can calm the agitations of the soul. It is one of the most magnificent presents God has given us.

MARTIN LUTHER

11And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and *how* you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. 12The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."
13Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."
14Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched *grain* to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. 15And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his



young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16Also let *grain* from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

17So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. 18Then she took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

19And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you."

So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today *is* Boaz."

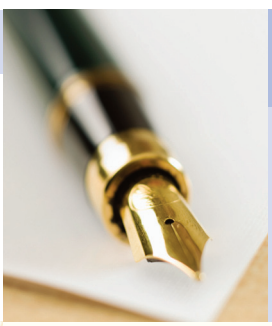
20Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man *is* a relation of ours, one of our close relatives."

21Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

22And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "*It is* good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field." 23So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Ruth's Redemption Assured

3 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? 2Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, *is he* not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3Therefore wash yourself and anoint



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me? | RUTH 1:21

Naomi left fullness to find fullness but she only found emptiness. When she left with her husband and two sons ten years earlier, they would have testified that they were leaving because of the famine. They thought they were empty. They went to Moab to escape the famine and emptiness. It took ten years of the faithful dealing of the Lord for her to realize that, in fact, when she left, she was leaving fullness.

The way the Lord applied this to my heart was to remind me of how many times I took my eyes off Jesus because I thought there was fullness outside of Him. I ran after spiritual gifts or a special anointing—for awhile, I even ran after the attributes of God instead of the God whose attributes they were. I discovered what Naomi discovered: when I leave fullness to find fullness I will only find emptiness. Oh, for a single eye!

yourself, put on your *best* garment and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do."

5And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."

6So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. 7And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

8Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. 9And he said, "Who *are* you?"

So she answered, "I *am* Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing,[a] for you are a close relative."

10Then he said, "Blessed *are* you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. 11And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you *are* a virtuous woman. 12Now it is true that I *am* a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. 13Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be *that* if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, *as* the LORD lives! Lie down until morning."

14So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, "Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15Also he said, "Bring the shawl that *is* on you and hold it." And when she held it, he measured six *ephahs* of barley, and laid *it* on her. Then she[a] went into the city.

16When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "*Is* that you, my daughter?"

Then she told her all that the man had done for her. 17And she said, "These six *ephahs* of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"

18Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

God has put us in a beautiful world, and wants us to celebrate it, but he wants us then to use our imaginations to write those other parts. We'll get it wrong, we will imagine it wrong, but then we'll get glimmers which are getting it right, and the music will grow, and swell, and we will teach one another, and enlarge one another's horizons so that we can actually glimpse and see that there is to be a yet fuller beauty, a beauty in which the ugliness of this world is redeemed, in which the violence is rebuked, in which the possibilities of this world are finally fulfilled.

N.T. WRIGHT

Boaz Redeems Ruth

4 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend,[a] sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. 2And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 3Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech. 4And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it;* but if you[a] will not

3:9 [a]Or *Spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant*
3:15 [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Vulgate read *she;* Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Targum read *he.* **4:1** [a]Hebrew *peloni almoni;* literally *so and so* **4:4** [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *he.*

redeem *it, then* tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it,* and I *am* next after you.'"

And he said, "I will redeem *it*."

5Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate[a] the name of the dead through his inheritance."

6And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*."

7Now this *was the custom* in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave *it* to the other, and this *was* a confirmation in Israel.

8Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy *it* for yourself." So he took off his sandal. 9And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. 10Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate.[a] You *are* witnesses this day."

11And all the people who *were* at the gate, and the elders, said, "*We are* witnesses.

4:5 [a]Literally *raise up* **4:10** [a]Probably his civic office



MELISSA BRADY • Singer/Songwriter, Wife of Jim Brady of *The Booth Brothers*

The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge. | RUTH 2:12

Growing up in a preacher's home, I heard many Bible stories and I loved them. The story of Ruth was no exception because it was full of drama. She got married, was widowed, faced a famine, moved to another country, got married again, and then lived happily ever after. Well, that was my little girl interpretation of the story.

I knew God was taking care of me, just like He took care of Ruth. But my parents were taking care of me too. So, although I believed the Bible to be true, it was hard to fully understand how the stories in the Bible related to me personally.

My perspective of the Bible began to change around the age of thirteen when I found myself in need of new glasses. I was reluctant to mention it to my parents because I wasn't sure they had the money to buy them. So, for the first time, I prayed for something for myself.

The LORD make the woman who is coming
to your house like Rachel and Leah, the
two who built the house of Israel; and may
you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous
in Bethlehem. 12May your house be like
the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to
Judah, because of the offspring which the
LORD will give you from this young woman."

Descendants of Boaz and Ruth

13So Boaz took Ruth and she became
his wife; and when he went in to her, the
LORD gave her conception, and she bore
a son. 14Then the women said to Naomi,
"Blessed *be* the LORD, who has not left
you this day without a close relative; and
may his name be famous in Israel! 15And
may he be to you a restorer of life and
a nourisher of your old age; for your
daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is
better to you than seven sons, has borne
him." 16Then Naomi took the child and
laid him on her bosom, and became a
nurse to him. 17Also the neighbor women
gave him a name, saying, "There is a son
born to Naomi." And they called his name
Obed. He *is* the father of Jesse, the father
of David.

18Now this *is* the genealogy of Perez:
Perez begot Hezron; 19Hezron begot Ram,
and Ram begot Amminadab; 20Amminadab
begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot
Salmon;[a] 21Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz
begot Obed; 22Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse
begot David.

4:20 [a]Hebrew *Salmah*

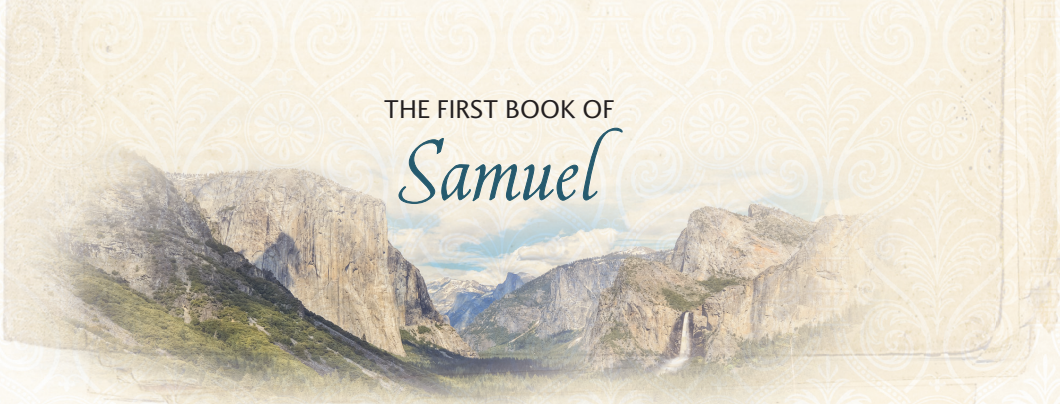
Although I knew I could talk to God about everything in my life, I was hesitant. Since I was asking for myself, would He think I was selfish? I wasn't going to ask for fun stuff; I was going to ask for something I needed, and I *really* needed new glasses.

I got ready for bed and began a shy, nervous conversation with my heavenly Father. It sounded something like "OK, God, um . . . You know I really need new glasses, and I'm not sure Mom and Dad can afford them right now. So . . . if You don't mind . . . if it would be all right . . . uh . . . could you help me get some new glasses?"

I was surprised the next morning when the pastor of the church where my family had ministered in evangelism handed me an envelope. Inside was a check written to me. A love offering, he said, for playing the piano during the church revival.

I immediately thought of my prayer from the night before. Oh, the excitement, knowing God had answered my prayer and the sweet reminder that I could talk to Him about anything!

I'll never forget that day, when prayer became personal and the truths of the Bible came alive in my heart. It set me on a journey of faith and discovery, where I continually see God's handiwork in my life.



THE FIRST BOOK OF

Samuel

The Family of Elkanah

1 Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu,[a] the son of Tohu,[b] the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 2And he had two wives: the name of one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. 3This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there. 4And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. 5But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the LORD had closed her womb. 6And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the LORD had closed her womb. 7So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat.

Hannah's Vow

8Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? *Am* I not better to you than ten sons?"

9So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle[a] of the LORD. 10And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish. 11Then she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."

12And it happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth. 13Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 14So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!"

15But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I *am* a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman,[a] for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now."

17Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him."

18And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer *sad.*

Samuel Is Born and Dedicated

19Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. 20So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel,[a] *saying,* "Because I have asked for him from the LORD."

21Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and his vow. 22But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "*Not* until the child is weaned; then I will

1:1 [a]Spelled *Eliel* in 1 Chronicles 6:34 [b]Spelled *Toah* in 1 Chronicles 6:34 **1:9** [a]Hebrew *heykal,* palace or temple **1:16** [a]Literally *daughter of Belial* **1:20** [a]Literally *Heard by God*

take him, that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever."

23So Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD establish His[a] word." Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

24Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls,[a] one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child *was* young. 25Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. 26And she said, "O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I *am* the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. 27For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. 28Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD." So they worshiped the LORD there.

Hannah's Prayer

2 And Hannah prayed and said:

"My heart rejoices in the LORD;
My horn[a] is exalted in the LORD.
I smile at my enemies,
Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

2 "No one is holy like the LORD,
For *there is* none besides You,
Nor *is there* any rock like our God.

3 "Talk no more so very proudly;
Let no arrogance come from your mouth,
For the LORD *is* the God of knowledge;
And by Him actions are weighed.

4 "The bows of the mighty men *are* broken,
And those who stumbled are girded with strength.
5 *Those who were* full have hired themselves out for bread,
And the hungry have ceased *to hunger.*
Even the barren has borne seven,
And she who has many children has become feeble.

6 "The LORD kills and makes alive;
He brings down to the grave and brings up.
7 The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
He brings low and lifts up.
8 He raises the poor from the dust
And lifts the beggar from the ash heap,
To set *them* among princes
And make them inherit the throne of glory.

"For the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD's,
And He has set the world upon them.
9 He will guard the feet of His saints,
But the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

"For by strength no man shall prevail.
10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces;
From heaven He will thunder against them.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

"He will give strength to His king,
And exalt the horn of His anointed."

11Then Elkanah went to his house at Ramah. But the child ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.

The Wicked Sons of Eli

12Now the sons of Eli *were* corrupt;[a] they did not know the LORD. 13And the priests' custom with the people *was that* when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14Then he would thrust *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw."

16And *if* the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; *then* you may take *as much* as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "*No,* but you must give *it* now; and if not, I will take *it* by force."

1:23 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Syriac read *your.* **1:24** [a]Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Syriac read *a three-year-old bull.* **2:1** [a]That is, strength
2:12 [a]Literally *sons of Belial*

17 Therefore the sin of the young men
was very great before the LORD, for men
abhorred the offering of the LORD.

Samuel's Childhood Ministry

18 But Samuel ministered before the
LORD, *even as* a child, wearing a linen ephod.
19 Moreover his mother used to make him a
little robe, and bring *it* to him year by year
when she came up with her husband to
offer the yearly sacrifice. 20 And Eli would
bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "The
LORD give you descendants from this woman
for the loan that was given to the LORD."
Then they would go to their own home.
21 And the LORD visited Hannah, so that
she conceived and bore three sons and two
daughters. Meanwhile the child Samuel
grew before the LORD.

Prophecy Against Eli's Household

22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard
everything his sons did to all Israel,[a] and
how they lay with the women who assem-
bled at the door of the tabernacle of
meeting. 23 So he said to them, "Why do you
do such things? For I hear of your evil deal-
ings from all the people. 24 No, my sons! For
it is not a good report that I hear. You make
the LORD's people transgress. 25 If one man
sins against another, God will judge him.
But if a man sins against the LORD, who will
intercede for him?" Nevertheless they did
not heed the voice of their father, because
the LORD desired to kill them.
26 And the child Samuel grew in stature,
and in favor both with the LORD and men.
27 Then a man of God came to Eli and
said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Did I not
clearly reveal Myself to the house of your
father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's
house? 28 Did I not choose him out of all
the tribes of Israel *to be* My priest, to offer
upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear
an ephod before Me? And did I not give
to the house of your father all the offer-
ings of the children of Israel made by fire?
29 Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My
offering which I have commanded *in My*
dwelling place, and honor your sons more
than Me, to make yourselves fat with the
best of all the offerings of Israel My people?'
30 Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: 'I
said indeed *that* your house and the house

2:22 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint omit the rest of this verse.



BUDDY MULLINS • Homecoming Artist

But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the LORD had closed her womb. And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the LORD had closed her womb. So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat. | 1 SAMUEL 1:5–7

I have always loved music: playing, singing, just performing in any way I could. I am truly grateful that I have been able to do this for so much of my life. Back a few years ago, I heard someone say, "God doesn't only want the things that you struggle with or that you need help in; He also wants the good things in your life." He wants the things you are good at, like our talents and giftedness. That's why the story of Hannah has been so moving for me, because it speaks of a woman who desperately wanted a child. So desperate that she made a vow to God to give the child back to God

of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 31Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. 32And you will see an enemy *in My* dwelling place, *despite* all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. 33But any of your men *whom* I do not cut off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age. 34Now this *shall be* a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them. 35Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest *who* shall do according to what *is* in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever. 36And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left in your house will come *and* bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and say, "Please, put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread." '"

Samuel's First Prophecy

3 Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; *there was* no widespread revelation. 2And it came to pass at that time, while Eli *was* lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, 3and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle[a] of the LORD where the ark of God *was,* and while Samuel was lying down, 4that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" 5So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me."

And he said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down.

6Then the LORD called yet again, "Samuel!"

So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7(Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.)

8And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me."

3:3 [a]Hebrew *heykal,* palace or temple

once he was born. And she kept her promise! Personally, I have wanted God to bless me by allowing my dream to be born, my vision to have breath, my goals to come to life, but I often wonder with all the blessings I have received, how well have I done at returning them back to God? I am still learning that my abilities and talents find their greatest use in His hands. The amazing thing is this: the fulfillments of those dreams also find their meaning in His possession.

Do you long to accomplish something great in this life? Pray earnestly to the Father. He loves to give His children the desires of their hearts. But we will truly know the *joy* in the birth of our dream when we learn to give it back. Just think what your gift will look like and how it will be used if you will allow the Creator of that gift the ownership He deserves.

Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy. 9Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."

11Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 14And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

15So Samuel lay down until morning,[a] and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. 16Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son!"

He answered, "Here I am."

17And he said, "What *is* the word that *the LORD* spoke to you? Please do not hide *it* from me. God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that He said to you." 18Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It *is* the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him."

19So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel *had been* established as a prophet of the LORD. 21Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

4 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.[a]

The Ark of God Captured

Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines, and encamped beside Ebenezer; and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. 2Then the Philistines put themselves in battle array against Israel. And when they joined battle, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men of the army in the field. 3And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies." 4So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook. 6Now when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What *does* the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews *mean?*" Then they understood that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp. 7So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp!" And they said, "Woe to us! For such a thing has never happened before. 8Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These *are* the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. 9Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Conduct yourselves like men, and fight!"

10So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. 11Also the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

Death of Eli

12Then a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day, and came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. 13Now when he came, there was Eli, sitting on a seat by the wayside watching,[a] for his

3:15 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint adds *and he arose in the morning.* **4:1** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate add *And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight;* Septuagint adds further *against Israel.* **4:13** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *beside the gate watching the road.*

heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told *it,* all the city cried out. 14When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What *does* the sound of this tumult *mean?*" And the man came quickly and told Eli. 15Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see.

16Then the man said to Eli, "I *am* he who came from the battle. And I fled today from the battle line."

And he said, "What happened, my son?"

17So the messenger answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God has been captured."

18Then it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

Ichabod

19Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *due* to be delivered; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and gave birth, for her labor pains came upon her. 20And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not fear, for you have borne a son." But she did not answer, nor did she regard *it*. 21Then she named the child Ichabod,[a] saying, "The glory has departed from Israel!" because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. 22And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

The Philistines and the Ark

5 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon[a] and set it by Dagon. 3And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again. 4And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands *were* broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's *torso*[a] was left of it. 5Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

6But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors,[a] *both* Ashdod and its territory. 7And when the men of Ashdod saw how *it was,* they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god." 8Therefore they sent and gathered to themselves all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?"

And they answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried away to Gath." So they carried the ark of the God of Israel away. 9So it was, after they had carried it away, that the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction; and He struck the men of the city, both small and great, and tumors broke out on them.

10Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. So it was, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people!" 11So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. 12And the men who did not die were stricken with the tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

The Ark Returned to Israel

6 Now the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. 2And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do

4:21 [a]Literally *Inglorious* **5:2** [a]A Philistine idol **5:4** [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *Dagon.* **5:6** [a]Probably bubonic plague. Septuagint and Vulgate add here *And in the midst of their land rats sprang up, and there was a great death panic in the city.*

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

1 SAMUEL 7:12

"But the LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel" (1 Sam. 7:10). Like Samuel, Robert Robinson knew what it was to hear the Lord thunder and rescue him. Only instead of saving him from Philistines, the Lord saved Robinson from himself.

Robert Robinson was only eight years old when his father died, and he eventually became too unruly for his mother to manage. As soon as Robert turned fourteen, his mother sent him off to London to become an apprentice to a barber, but there his life became occupied with gambling and drinking. After one particular day spent with his rowdy friends and a fortune teller, something inside Robinson didn't sit right, and he encouraged his friends to join him to hear evangelist George Whitfield. Whitfield's sermon was based on Matthew 3, where Jesus called the Pharisees a brood of vipers. Whitfield thundered, "Oh, my hearers! The wrath to come! The wrath to come!"

Robinson felt deeply convicted, and for three years, he couldn't shake Whitfield's words from his conscience. Finally, after three years of Jesus' pursuing him, at twenty years old, Robinson gave his life to Christ, allowing the Lord to rescue him from his sin. It wasn't long before Robinson became a minister himself, and as he was preparing his sermon for Pentecost Sunday, he wrote the hymn "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing." Like Samuel after being rescued from the Philistines, Robinson raised his Ebenezer, acknowledging how far the Lord had helped him, and how much more he needed Him still: "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love; here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above."

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Robert Robinson | 1758

1. Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of Thy redeeming love.

2. Sorrowing I shall be in spirit,
Till released from flesh and sin,
Yet from what I do inherit,
Here Thy praises I'll begin;
Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Here by Thy great help I've come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

3. Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood;
How His kindness yet pursues me
Mortal tongue can never tell,
Clothed in flesh, till death shall loose me
I cannot proclaim it well.

4. O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

5. O that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in blood washed linen
How I'll sing Thy sovereign grace;
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,
Take my ransomed soul away;
Send thine angels now to carry
Me to realms of endless day.

with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it to its place."

3So they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but by all means return *it* to Him *with* a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you."

4Then they said, "What *is* the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?"

They answered, "Five golden tumors and five golden rats, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague *was* on all of you and on your lords. 5Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your rats that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you, from your gods, and from your land. 6Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart? 7Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. 8Then take the ark of the LORD and set it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him *as* a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go. 9And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, *then* He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that *it is* not His hand *that* struck us—it happened to us by chance."

10Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. 11And they set the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. 12Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh.

13Now *the people of* Beth Shemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. 14Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone *was* there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. 15The Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the chest that *was* with it, in which *were* the articles of gold, and put *them* on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the LORD. 16So when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day.

17These *are* the golden tumors which the Philistines returned *as* a trespass offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; 18and the golden rats, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging* to the five lords, *both* fortified cities and country villages, even as far as the large *stone of* Abel on which they set the ark of the LORD, *which stone remains* to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

19Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men[a] of the people, and the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter.

The Ark at Kirjath Jearim

20And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? And to whom shall it go up from us?" 21So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down *and* take it up with you."

7 Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

Samuel Judges Israel

2So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD

6:19 [a]Or *He struck seventy men of the people and fifty oxen of a man*

with all your hearts, *then* put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths[a] from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." 4So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths,[a] and served the LORD only.

5And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you." 6So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.

7Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *of it,* they were afraid of the Philistines. 8So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

9And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered *it as* a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. 10Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. 11And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. 12Then Samuel took a stone and set *it* up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer,[a] saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

13So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14Then the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. 17But he always returned to Ramah, for his home *was* there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

Israel Demands a King

8 Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; *they were* judges in Beersheba. 3But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

4Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

6But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 8According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."

10So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint *them* for his own chariots and *to be* his horsemen, and *some* will run before his chariots. 12He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, *will set some* to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and *some* to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13He will take your daughters *to be* perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give *them* to his servants. 15He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men,[a] and

7:3 [a]Canaanite goddesses **7:4** [a]Canaanite goddesses **7:12** [a]Literally *Stone of Help* **8:16** [a]Septuagint reads *cattle.*

your donkeys, and put *them* to his work. [17]He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. [18]And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day."

[19]Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, [20]that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

[21]And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. [22]So the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king."

And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city."

Saul Chosen to Be King

9 There was a man of Benjamin whose name *was* Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. [2]And he had a choice and handsome son whose name *was* Saul. *There was* not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward *he was* taller than any of the people.

[3]Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, "Please take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." [4]So he passed through the mountains of Ephraim and through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find *them*. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and *they were* not *there*. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find *them*.

[5]When they had come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who *was* with him, "Come, let us return, lest my father cease *caring* about the donkeys and become worried about us."

[6]And he said to him, "Look now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honorable man; all that he says surely comes to pass. So let us go there; perhaps he can show us the way that we should go."

[7]Then Saul said to his servant, "But look, *if* we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread in our vessels is all gone, and *there is* no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"

[8]And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Look, I have here at hand one-fourth of a shekel of silver. I will give *that* to the man of God, to tell us our way." [9](Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: "Come, let us go to the seer"; for *he who is* now *called* a prophet was formerly called a seer.)

[10]Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God *was*.

[11]As they went up the hill to the city, they met some young women going out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?"

[12]And they answered them and said, "Yes, there he is, just ahead of you. Hurry now; for today he came to this city, because there is a sacrifice of the people today on the high place. [13]As soon as you come into the city, you will surely find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up, for about this time you will find him." [14]So they went up to the city. As they were coming into the city, there was Samuel, coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

[15]Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear the day before Saul came, saying, [16]"Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over My people Israel, that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have



looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me."

17So when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people." 18Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, "Please tell me, where *is* the seer's house?"

19Samuel answered Saul and said, "I *am* the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that *is* in your heart. 20But as for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not be anxious about them, for they have been found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on you and on all your father's house?"

21And Saul answered and said, "*Am* I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe[a] of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?"

22Now Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and had them sit in the place of honor among those who were invited; there *were* about thirty persons. 23And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Set it apart.'" 24So the cook took up the thigh with its upper part and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, "Here it is, what was kept back. *It* was set apart for you. Eat; for until this time it has been kept for you, since I said I invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

25When they had come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* spoke with Saul on the top of the house.[a] 26They arose early; and it was about the dawning of the day that Samuel called to Saul on the top of the house, saying, "Get up, that I may send you on your way." And Saul arose, and both of them went outside, he and Samuel.

Saul Anointed King

27As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us." And he went on. "But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God."

10 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured *it* on his head, and kissed him and said: "*Is it* not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance?[a] 2When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?" ' 3Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. 4And they will greet you and give you two *loaves* of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. 5After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison *is*. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying. 6Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. 7And let it be, when these signs come to you, *that* you do as the occasion demands; for God *is* with you. 8You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings *and* make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."

9So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. 10When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What *is* this *that* has come upon the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets?" 12Then

9:21 [a]Literally *tribes* **9:25** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint omits *He spoke with Saul on the top of the house;* Septuagint and Vulgate add *And he prepared a bed for Saul on the top of the house, and he slept.* **10:1** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *His people Israel; and you shall rule the people of the Lord;* Septuagint and Vulgate add *And you shall deliver His people from the hands of their enemies all around them. And this shall be a sign to you, that God has anointed you to be a prince.*

a man from there answered and said, "But who *is* their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "*Is* Saul also among the prophets?" 13And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place.

14Then Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?"

So he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that *they were* nowhere *to be found,* we went to Samuel."

15And Saul's uncle said, "Tell me, please, what Samuel said to you."

16So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, he did not tell him what Samuel had said.

Saul Proclaimed King

17Then Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah, 18and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians *and* from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.' 19But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans."[a]

20And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. 21When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. 22Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD answered, "There he is, hidden among the equipment."

23So they ran and brought him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. 24And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen, that *there is* no one like him among all the people?"

So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"

25Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote *it* in a book and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. 26And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant *men* went with him, whose hearts God had touched. 27But some rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

Saul Saves Jabesh Gilead

11 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you."

2And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "On this *condition* I will make *a covenant* with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel."

3Then the elders of Jabesh said to him, "Hold off for seven days, that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And then, if *there is* no one to save us, we will come out to you."

4So the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people. And all the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5Now there was Saul, coming behind the herd from the field; and Saul said, "What *troubles* the people, that they weep?" And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. 6Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard this news, and his anger was greatly aroused. 7So he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the territory of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen."

And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. 8When he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. 9And they said to the messengers who came, "Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh Gilead: 'Tomorrow, by *the time* the sun is hot, you shall have help.'" Then the messengers came and reported *it* to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad. 10Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will

10:19 [a]Literally *thousands*

come out to you, and you may do with us whatever seems good to you."

11So it was, on the next day, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and killed Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it happened that those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

12Then the people said to Samuel, "Who *is* he who said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death."

13But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished salvation in Israel."

14Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there." 15So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

Samuel's Address at Saul's Coronation

12 Now Samuel said to all Israel: "Indeed I have heeded your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you. 2And now here is the king, walking before you; and I am old and gray-headed, and look, my sons *are* with you. I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. 3Here I am. Witness against me before the LORD and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received *any* bribe with which to blind my eyes? I will restore *it* to you."

4And they said, "You have not cheated us or oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from any man's hand."

5Then he said to them, "The LORD *is* witness against you, and His anointed *is* witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand."

And they answered, "*He is* witness."

6Then Samuel said to the people, "*It is* the LORD who raised up Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. 7Now therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did to you and your fathers: 8When Jacob had gone into Egypt,[a] and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. 9And when they forgot the LORD their God, He sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them. 10Then they cried out to the LORD, and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and Ashtoreths;[a] but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve You.' 11And the LORD sent Jerubbaal,[a] Bedan,[b] Jephthah, and Samuel,[c] and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety. 12And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God *was* your king.

13"Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen *and* whom you have desired. And take note, the LORD has set a king over you. 14If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. 15However, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

16"Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes: 17*Is* today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the LORD, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking a king for yourselves."

18So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

19And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray

12:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint adds *and the Egyptians afflicted them.* **12:10** [a]Canaanite goddesses
12:11 [a]Syriac reads *Deborah;* Targum reads *Gideon.* [b]Septuagint and Syriac read *Barak;* Targum reads *Simson.* [c]Syriac reads *Simson.*

for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves."

20Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. 21And do not turn aside; for *then you would go* after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they *are* nothing. 22For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people. 23Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. 24Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. 25But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king."

Saul's Unlawful Sacrifice

13 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,[a] 2Saul chose for himself three thousand *men* of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent.

3And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it*. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!" 4Now all Israel heard it said *that* Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel had also become an abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal.

5Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty[a] thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. 6When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. 7And *some of* the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

As for Saul, he *was* still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. 8Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. 9So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering. 10Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him.

11And Samuel said, "What have you done?"

Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* you did not come within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, 12then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering."

13And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. For now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him *to be* commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

15Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.[a] And Saul numbered the people present with him, about six hundred men.

No Weapons for the Army

16Saul, Jonathan his son, and the people present with them remained in Gibeah of Benjamin. But the Philistines encamped in Michmash. 17Then raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned onto the road to Ophrah, to the land of Shual, 18another company turned to the road *to* Beth Horon, and another company turned *to* the road

13:1 [a]The Hebrew is difficult (compare 2 Samuel 5:4; 2 Kings 14:2; see also 2 Samuel 2:10; Acts 13:21). **13:5** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; Syriac and some manuscripts of the Septuagint read *three*. **13:15** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate add *And the rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the people who fought against them, going from Gilgal to Gibeah in the hill of Benjamin.*

of the border that overlooks the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

19 Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears." 20 But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle; 21 and the charge for a sharpening was a pim[a] for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to set the points of the goads. 22 So it came about, on the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who *were* with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son.

23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

Jonathan Defeats the Philistines

14 Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that *is* on the other side." But he did not tell his father. 2 And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron. The people who *were* with him *were* about six hundred men. 3 Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

4 Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side. And the name of one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5 The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

6 Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few."

7 So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

8 Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to *these* men, and we will show ourselves to them. 9 If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. 10 But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this *will be* a sign to us."

11 So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden." 12 Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something."

Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel." 13 And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. 14 That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.[a]

15 And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling. 16 Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and *there* was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there. 17 Then Saul said to the people who *were* with him, "Now call the roll and see who has gone from us." And when they had called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armorbearer *were* not *there*. 18 And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark[a] of God here" (for at that time the ark[b] of God was with the children of Israel). 19 Now it happened, while Saul talked to the priest, that the noise which *was* in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." 20 Then Saul and all the people who *were* with him assembled, and they went to the battle; and indeed every man's sword was against his neighbor, *and there was* very great confusion. 21 Moreover the Hebrews *who* were

13:21 [a]About two-thirds shekel weight **14:14** [a]Literally *half the area plowed by a yoke* (of oxen in a day) **14:18** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *ephod*. [b]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *ephod*.

with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the camp *from the* surrounding *country,* they also joined the Israelites who *were* with Saul and Jonathan. 22Likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden in the mountains of Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in the battle. 23So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth Aven.

Saul's Rash Oath

24And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed *is* the man who eats *any* food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. 25Now all *the people* of the land came to a forest; and there was honey on the ground. 26And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey, dripping; but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. 27But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that *was* in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened. 28Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed *is* the man who eats food this day.'" And the people were faint.

29But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. 30How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

31Now they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. So the people were very faint. 32And the people rushed on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered *them* on the ground; and the people ate *them* with the blood. 33Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!"

So he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone to me this day." 34Then Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, 'Bring me here every man's ox and every man's sheep, slaughter *them* here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.'" So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night, and slaughtered *it* there. 35Then Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

36Now Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light; and let us not leave a man of them."

And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you."

Then the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."

37So Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him that day. 38And Saul said, "Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today. 39For *as* the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not a man among all the people answered him. 40Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other side."

And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."

41Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, "Give a perfect *lot*."[a] So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped. 42And Saul said, "Cast *lots* between my son Jonathan and me." So Jonathan was taken. 43Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done."

And Jonathan told him, and said, "I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in my hand. So now I must die!"

44Saul answered, "God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

45But the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! *As* the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.

14:41 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *Why do You not answer Your servant today? If the injustice is with me or Jonathan my son, O* LORD *God of Israel, give proof; and if You say it is with Your people Israel, give holiness.*

[46]Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

Saul's Continuing Wars

[47]So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed *them.*[a] [48]And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.

[49]The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Jishui,[a] and Malchishua. And the names of his two daughters *were these:* the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. [50]The name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army *was* Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. [51]Kish *was* the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel.

[52]Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.

Saul Spares King Agag

15 Samuel also said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD. [2]Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. [3]Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

[4]So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. [5]And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley.

[6]Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. [7]And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. [8]He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. [9]But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all *that was* good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

Saul Rejected as King

[10]Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, [11]"I greatly regret that I have set up Saul *as* king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. [12]So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." [13]Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed *are* you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

[14]But Samuel said, "What then *is* this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

[15]And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

[16]Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night."

And he said to him, "Speak on."

[17]So Samuel said, "When you *were* little in your own eyes, *were* you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? [18]Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' [19]Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"

[20]And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and

14:47 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *prospered.* **14:49** [a]Called *Abinadab* in 1 Chronicles 8:33 and 9:39

brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

22So Samuel said:

"Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.
23 For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft,
And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
He also has rejected you from *being* king."

24Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."

26But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

27And as Samuel turned around to go away, *Saul* seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, *who is* better than you. 29And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He *is* not a man, that He should relent."

30Then he said, "I have sinned; *yet* honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." 31So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

32Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously.

And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

33But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

34Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. 35And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

David Anointed King

16 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

2And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears *it,* he will kill me."

But the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."

4So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?"

5And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.

6So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before Him!"

7But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does* not *see* as man sees;[a] for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

8So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 9Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 10Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." 11And Samuel said to Jesse,

16:7 [a]Septuagint reads *For God does not see as man sees;* Targum reads *It is not by the appearance of a man;* Vulgate reads *Nor do I judge according to the looks of a man.*

"Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep."

And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down[a] till he comes here." [12]So he sent and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this *is* the one!" [13]Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well.

1 SAMUEL 16:16

A Distressing Spirit Troubles Saul

[14]But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him. [15]And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. [16]Let our master now command your servants, *who are* before you, to seek out a man *who is* a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well."

[17]So Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring *him* to me."

[18]Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *who is* skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD *is* with him."

[19]Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, who *is* with the sheep." [20]And Jesse took a donkey *loaded with* bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent *them* by his son David to Saul. [21]So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armorbearer. [22]Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight." [23]And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play *it* with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.

And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.

1 SAMUEL 16:23

David and Goliath

17 Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at Sochoh, which *belongs* to Judah; they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. [2]And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. [3]The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.

[4]And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. [5]*He had* a bronze helmet on his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of bronze. [6]And *he had* bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. [7]Now the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead *weighed* six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him. [8]Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel,

16:11 [a]Following Septuagint and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *turn around;* Targum and Syriac read *turn away*.

and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? *Am* I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. [9]If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." [10]And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." [11]When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

[12]Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name *was* Jesse, and who had eight sons. And the man was old, advanced *in years,* in the days of Saul. [13]The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. [14]David *was* the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul. [15]But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

[16]And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days, morning and evening.

[17]Then Jesse said to his son David, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried *grain* and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp. [18]And carry these ten cheeses to the captain of *their* thousand, and see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them." [19]Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel *were* in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

[20]So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, and took *the things* and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle. [21]For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army against army. [22]And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. [23]Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard *them.* [24]And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid. [25]So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be *that* the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption *from taxes* in Israel."

[26]Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

[27]And the people answered him in this manner, saying, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him."

[28]Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."

[29]And David said, "What have I done now? *Is there* not a cause?" [30]Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones *did.*

[31]Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported *them* to Saul; and he sent for him. [32]Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

[33]And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you *are* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

[34]But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, [35]I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught *it* by its beard, and struck and killed it. [36]Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." [37]Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the

lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

38So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. 39David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested *them*. And David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested *them*." So David took them off.

40Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine. 41So the Philistine came, and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore the shield *went* before him. 42And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was *only* a youth, ruddy and good-looking. 43So the Philistine said to David, "*Am* I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

45Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle *is* the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands."

48So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung *it* and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. 50So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But *there was* no sword in the hand of David. 51Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it.

And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. 52Now the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines as far as the entrance of the valley[a] and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell along the road to Shaaraim, even as far as Gath and Ekron. 53Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their tents. 54And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.

55When Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son *is* this youth?"

And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know."

56So the king said, "Inquire whose son this young man *is*."

57Then, as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58And Saul said to him, "Whose son *are* you, young man?"

So David answered, "*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

Saul Resents David

18 Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. 3Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4And Jonathan took off the robe that *was* on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

5So David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and* behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in

17:52 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Gath*.

Only be valiant for me, and fight the LORD*'s battles.*

1 SAMUEL 18:17

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body.

COLOSSIANS 3:15

There are many references to doing battle in the Scriptures, but the key to these "warring" verses is in this passage: *"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts."*

So often we have not stopped warring in ourselves, so we are viewed by the world not as the beautiful, peaceful, perfect bride but as the bickering, bitter fishwife. This is anything but that for which Christ gave His life. He wants to bring us (His bride) home to His Father—beautiful, flawless, graceful, efficient—so that His Dad will be completely pleased with His chosen bride. That's what He *will* have. He will only bring home His beautiful bride. And His Father will throw the biggest wedding feast ever to be given by the father of a groom. That's what Jesus is doing in us: making us established in every good word and work (2 Thess. 2:17)—blameless, flawless. The wedding of heaven will be perfect!



the sight of Saul's servants. 6Now it had happened as they were coming *home,* when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. 7So the women sang as they danced, and said:

"Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands."

Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments.

1 SAMUEL 18:6

8Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *only* thousands. Now *what* more can he have but the kingdom?" 9So Saul eyed David from that day forward.

10And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played *music* with his hand, as at other times; but *there was* a spear in Saul's hand. 11And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.

12Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul. 13Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. 14And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD *was* with him. 15Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. 16But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand.

1 SAMUEL 18:10

David Marries Michal

17 Then Saul said to David, "Here is my
older daughter Merab; I will give her to you
as a wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight
the LORD's battles." For Saul thought, "Let
my hand not be against him, but let the
hand of the Philistines be against him."
18 So David said to Saul, "Who *am* I,
and what *is* my life *or* my father's family in
Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the
king?" 19 But it happened at the time when
Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been
given to David, that she was given to Adriel
the Meholathite as a wife.
20 Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved
David. And they told Saul, and the thing
pleased him. 21 So Saul said, "I will give her to
him, that she may be a snare to him, and that
the hand of the Philistines may be against
him." Therefore Saul said to David a second
time, "You shall be my son-in-law today."
22 And Saul commanded his servants,
"Communicate with David secretly, and
say, 'Look, the king has delight in you, and
all his servants love you. Now therefore,
become the king's son-in-law.'"
23 So Saul's servants spoke those words
in the hearing of David. And David said,
"Does it seem to you *a* light *thing* to be a
king's son-in-law, seeing I *am* a poor and
lightly esteemed man?" 24 And the servants
of Saul told him, saying, "In this manner
David spoke."
25 Then Saul said, "Thus you shall say to
David: 'The king does not desire any dowry
but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines,
to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'"
But Saul thought to make David fall by the
hand of the Philistines. 26 So when his ser-
vants told David these words, it pleased
David well to become the king's son-in-law.
Now the days had not expired; 27 therefore
David arose and went, he and his men, and
killed two hundred men of the Philistines.
And David brought their foreskins, and they
gave them in full count to the king, that he
might become the king's son-in-law. Then
Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife.
28 Thus Saul saw and knew that the LORD
was with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's
daughter, loved him; 29 and Saul was still
more afraid of David. So Saul became David's
enemy continually. 30 Then the princes of
the Philistines went out *to war.* And so it was,
whenever they went out, *that* David behaved
more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so
that his name became highly esteemed.

Saul Persecutes David

19 Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son
and to all his servants, that they
should kill David; but Jonathan, Saul's son,
delighted greatly in David. 2 So Jonathan
told David, saying, "My father Saul seeks
to kill you. Therefore please be on your
guard until morning, and stay in a secret
place and hide. 3 And I will go out and stand
beside my father in the field where you *are,*
and I will speak with my father about you.
Then what I observe, I will tell you."
4 Thus Jonathan spoke well of David to
Saul his father, and said to him, "Let not
the king sin against his servant, against
David, because he has not sinned against
you, and because his works *have been* very
good toward you. 5 For he took his life in
his hands and killed the Philistine, and the
LORD brought about a great deliverance
for all Israel. You saw *it* and rejoiced. Why
then will you sin against innocent blood,
to kill David without a cause?"
6 So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan,
and Saul swore, "*As* the LORD lives, he shall
not be killed." 7 Then Jonathan called
David, and Jonathan told him all these
things. So Jonathan brought David to Saul,
and he was in his presence as in times past.
8 And there was war again; and David
went out and fought with the Philistines,
and struck them with a mighty blow, and
they fled from him.
9 Now the distressing spirit from the
LORD came upon Saul as he sat in his house
with his spear in his hand. And David was

Now the distressing spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing music with his hand.

1 SAMUEL 19:9

playing *music* with *his* hand. [10]Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night.

[11]Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." [12]So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped. [13]And Michal took an image and laid *it* in the bed, put a cover of goats' *hair* for his head, and covered *it* with clothes. [14]So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He *is* sick."

[15]Then Saul sent the messengers *back* to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." [16]And when the messengers had come in, there was the image in the bed, with a cover of goats' *hair* for his head. [17]Then Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped?"

And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'"

[18]So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. [19]Now it was told Saul, saying, "Take note, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah!" [20]Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. [21]And when Saul was told, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. Then Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. [22]Then he also went to Ramah, and came to the great well that *is* at Sechu. So he asked, and said, "Where *are* Samuel and David?"

And *someone* said, "Indeed *they are* at Naioth in Ramah." [23]So he went there to Naioth in Ramah. Then the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. [24]And he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "*Is* Saul also among the prophets?"[a]

Jonathan's Loyalty to David

20 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What *is* my iniquity, and what *is* my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

[2]So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It *is* not *so!*"

[3]Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, *as* the LORD lives and *as* your soul lives, *there is* but a step between me and death."

[4]So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do *it* for you."

[5]And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow *is* the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third *day* at evening. [6]If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked *permission* of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' [7]If he says thus: '*It is* well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him. [8]Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?"

[9]But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?"

[10]Then David said to Jonathan, "Who

19:24 [a]Compare 1 Samuel 10:12

will tell me, or what *if* your father answers you roughly?"

11And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So both of them went out into the field. 12Then Jonathan said to David: "The LORD God of Israel *is witness!* When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, *or* the third *day,* and indeed *there is* good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you, 13may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father *to do* you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father. 14And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; 15but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." 16So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying,* "Let the LORD require *it* at the hand of David's enemies."

17Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul. 18Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow *is* the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19And *when* you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel. 20Then I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target; 21and there I will send a lad, *saying,* 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to the lad, 'Look, the arrows *are* on this side of you; get them and come'—then, as the LORD lives, *there is* safety for you and no harm. 22But if I say thus to the young man, 'Look, the arrows *are* beyond you'—go your way, for the LORD has sent you away. 23And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD *be* between you and me forever."

24Then David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast. 25Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose,[a] and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. 26Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; he *is* unclean, surely he *is* unclean." 27And it happened the next day, the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?"

28So Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked *permission* of me *to go* to Bethlehem. 29And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me *to be there*. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table."

30Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious *woman!* Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? 31For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die."

32And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?" 33Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David.

34So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully.

35And so it was, in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad *was* with him. 36Then he said to his lad, "Now run, find the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37When the lad had come to the place where the arrow was which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and said, "*Is* not the arrow beyond you?" 38And Jonathan cried out after the lad, "Make haste, hurry, do not delay!" So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came back to his master. 39But the lad did not know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew of the matter. 40Then Jonathan gave his

20:25 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *he sat across from Jonathan.*

weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go, carry *them* to the city."

41As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from *a place* toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another; and they wept together, but David more so. 42Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.'" So he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.

And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?"

1 SAMUEL 21:11

David and the Holy Bread

21 Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, "Why *are* you alone, and no one is with you?"

2So David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, 'Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.' And I have directed *my* young men to such and such a place. 3Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give *me* five *loaves of* bread in my hand, or whatever can be found."

4And the priest answered David and said, "*There is* no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women."

5Then David answered the priest, and said to him, "Truly, women *have been* kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day."

6So the priest gave him holy *bread;* for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread *in its place* on the day when it was taken away.

7Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD. And his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who *belonged* to Saul.

8And David said to Ahimelech, "Is there not here on hand a spear or a sword? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste."

9So the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, there it is, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take *it.* For *there is* no other except that one here."

And David said, "*There is* none like it; give it to me."

David Flees to Gath

10Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. 11And the servants of Achish said to him, "*Is* this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying:

'Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands'?"[a]

12Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. 13So he changed his behavior before them, pretended madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard. 14Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? 15Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this *fellow* to play the madman in my presence? Shall this *fellow* come into my house?"

David's Four Hundred Men

22 David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. So when his brothers and all his father's house heard *it,* they went down there to him. 2And everyone *who was* in distress,

21:11 [a]Compare 1 Samuel 18:7

everyone who *was* in debt, and everyone *who was* discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him.

3Then David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother come here with you, till I know what God will do for me." 4So he brought them before the king of Moab, and they dwelt with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.

5Now the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go to the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

Saul Murders the Priests

6When Saul heard that David and the men who *were* with him had been discovered—now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him— 7then Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, you Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds? 8All of you have conspired against me, and *there is* no one who reveals to me that my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse; and *there is* not one of you who is sorry for me or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as *it is* this day."

9Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who was set over the servants of Saul, and said, "I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. 10And he inquired of the LORD for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

11So the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who *were* in Nob. And they all came to the king. 12And Saul said, "Hear now, son of Ahitub!"

He answered, "Here I am, my lord."

13Then Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day?"

14So Ahimelech answered the king and said, "And who among all your servants *is as* faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, who goes at your bidding, and is honorable in your house? 15Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? Far be it from me! Let not the king impute anything to his servant, *or* to any in the house of my father. For your servant knew nothing of all this, little or much."

16And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house!" 17Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me." But the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the LORD. 18And the king said to Doeg, "You turn and kill the priests!" So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod. 19Also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep—with the edge of the sword.

20Now one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. 21And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD's priests. 22So David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have caused *the death* of all the persons of your father's house. 23Stay with me; do not fear. For he who seeks my life seeks your life, but with me you *shall be* safe."

David Saves the City of Keilah

23 Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors."

2Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"

And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."

3But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" 4Then David inquired

of the LORD once again.

And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand." 5And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, *that* he went down *with* an ephod in his hand.

7And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars." 8Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

9When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." 10Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. 11Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant."

And the LORD said, "He will come down."

12Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?"

And the LORD said, "They will deliver *you*."

13So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.

David in Wilderness Strongholds

14And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. 15So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David *was* in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest.[a] 16Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David

23:15 [a]Or *in Horesh*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine* Devotional Contributor

Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. | 1 SAMUEL 23:16

What a precious scene. Jonathan encouraging David's hand in God! What took place in those woods God leaves to our sanctified imaginations to figure out. Who would throw away the precious privilege of the fellowship of kindred spirits? Yet, David did! When he went into enemy territory and joined up with the Philistines to escape Saul, he forfeited the fellowship of his friend Jonathan. This is the last time on the earth they ever got together for fellowship. When David chose to go to Ziklag, he also chose to break fellowship with Jonathan. May God keep me from losing the rich fellowship of remnant hearts because I wander off into the enemy's camp! It is a cost too high to pay!

in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. 17And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." 18So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

19Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding with us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon? 20Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand."

21And Saul said, "Blessed *are* you of the LORD, for you have compassion on me. 22Please go and find out for sure, and see the place where his hideout is, *and* who has seen him there. For I am told he is very crafty. 23See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides; and come back to me with certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall be, if he is in the land, that I will search for him throughout all the clans[a] of Judah."

24So they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. But David and his men *were* in the Wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. 25When Saul and his men went to seek *him,* they told David. Therefore he went down to the rock, and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that,* he pursued David in the Wilderness of Maon. 26Then Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. So David made haste to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were encircling David and his men to take them.

27But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!" 28Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place the Rock of Escape.[a] 29Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi.

David Spares Saul

24 Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David *is* in the Wilderness of En Gedi." 2Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there *was* a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) 4Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. 5Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. 6And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD." 7So David restrained his servants with *these* words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on *his* way.

8David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. 9And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm'? 10Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and *someone* urged *me* to kill you. But *my eye* spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he *is* the LORD's anointed.' 11Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that *there is* neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. 12Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you. 13As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be against you. 14After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? 15Therefore let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand."

23:23 [a]Literally *thousands* **23:28** [a]Hebrew *Sela Hammahlekoth*

16So it was, when David had finished
speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said,
"*Is* this your voice, my son David?" And Saul
lifted up his voice and wept. 17Then he said
to David: "You *are* more righteous than I; for
you have rewarded me with good, whereas
I have rewarded you with evil. 18And you
have shown this day how you have dealt
well with me; for when the LORD delivered
me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19For
if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get
away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward
you with good for what you have done to
me this day. 20And now I know indeed that
you shall surely be king, and that the king-
dom of Israel shall be established in your
hand. 21Therefore swear now to me by the
LORD that you will not cut off my descen-
dants after me, and that you will not destroy
my name from my father's house."

22So David swore to Saul. And Saul went
home, but David and his men went up to
the stronghold.

Death of Samuel

25 Then Samuel died; and the Israelites
gathered together and lamented
for him, and buried him at his home in
Ramah. And David arose and went down to
the Wilderness of Paran.[a]

David and the Wife of Nabal

2Now *there was* a man in Maon whose
business *was* in Carmel, and the man *was*
very rich. He had three thousand sheep
and a thousand goats. And he was shearing
his sheep in Carmel. 3The name of the man
was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail.
And *she was* a woman of good understanding
and beautiful appearance; but the man *was*
harsh and evil in *his* doings. He *was of the*
house of Caleb.

4When David heard in the wilderness
that Nabal was shearing his sheep, 5David
sent ten young men; and David said to the
young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal,
and greet him in my name. 6And thus you
shall say to him who lives *in prosperity:*
'Peace *be* to you, peace to your house, and
peace to all that you have! 7Now I have
heard that you have shearers. Your shep-
herds were with us, and we did not hurt
them, nor was there anything missing from
them all the while they were in Carmel.
8Ask your young men, and they will tell
you. Therefore let *my* young men find favor
in your eyes, for we come on a feast day.
Please give whatever comes to your hand
to your servants and to your son David.'"

9So when David's young men came,
they spoke to Nabal according to all these
words in the name of David, and waited.

10Then Nabal answered David's ser-
vants, and said, "Who *is* David, and who *is*
the son of Jesse? There are many servants
nowadays who break away each one from
his master. 11Shall I then take my bread and
my water and my meat that I have killed for
my shearers, and give *it* to men when I do
not know where they *are* from?"

12So David's young men turned on their
heels and went back; and they came and
told him all these words. 13Then David said
to his men, "Every man gird on his sword."
So every man girded on his sword, and
David also girded on his sword. And about
four hundred men went with David, and
two hundred stayed with the supplies.

14Now one of the young men told
Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Look, David
sent messengers from the wilderness to
greet our master; and he reviled them.
15But the men *were* very good to us, and we
were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as
long as we accompanied them, when we
were in the fields. 16They were a wall to us
both by night and day, all the time we were
with them keeping the sheep. 17Now there-
fore, know and consider what you will do,
for harm is determined against our master
and against all his household. For he *is such*
a scoundrel[a] that *one* cannot speak to him."

18Then Abigail made haste and took
two hundred *loaves* of bread, two skins of
wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs
of roasted *grain,* one hundred clusters of
raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and
loaded *them* on donkeys. 19And she said to
her servants, "Go on before me; see, I am
coming after you." But she did not tell her
husband Nabal.

20So it was, *as* she rode on the donkey,
that she went down under cover of the
hill; and there were David and his men,

25:1 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Maon.* **25:17** [a]Literally *son of Belial*

coming down toward her, and she met them. [21]Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have protected all that this *fellow* has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *belongs* to him. And he has repaid me evil for good. [22]May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who *belong* to him by morning light."

[23]Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground. [24]So she fell at his feet and said: "On me, my lord, *on* me *let* this iniquity *be!* And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant. [25]Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name *is,* so *is* he: Nabal[a] *is* his name, and folly *is* with him! But I, your maidservant, did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. [26]Now therefore, my lord, *as* the LORD lives and *as* your soul lives, since the LORD has held you back from coming to bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal. [27]And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. [28]Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the LORD, and evil is not found in you throughout your days. [29]Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; and the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, *as from* the pocket of a sling. [30]And it shall come to pass, when the LORD has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel, [31]that this will be no grief to you, nor offense of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself. But when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."

[32]Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed *is* the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! [33]And blessed *is* your advice and blessed *are* you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand. [34]For indeed, *as* the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!" [35]So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and respected your person."

[36]Now Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was, holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunk; therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until morning light. [37]So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became *like* a stone. [38]Then it happened, *after* about ten days, that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.

[39]So when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has kept His servant from evil! For the LORD has returned the wickedness of Nabal on his own head."

And David sent and proposed to Abigail, to take her as his wife. [40]When the servants of David had come to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her saying, "David sent us to you, to ask you to become his wife."

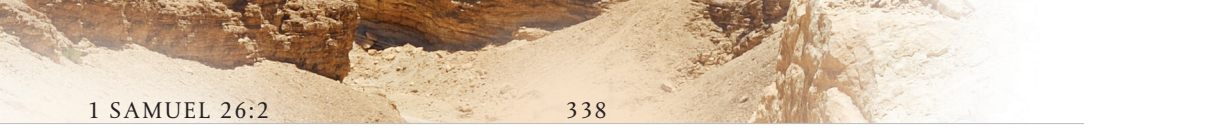
[41]Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, "Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." [42]So Abigail rose in haste and rode on a donkey, attended by five of her maidens; and she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife. [43]David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and so both of them were his wives.

[44]But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti[a] the son of Laish, who *was* from Gallim.

David Spares Saul a Second Time

26 Now the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding in the hill of Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon?"

25:25 [a]Literally *Fool* **25:44** [a]Spelled *Paltiel* in 2 Samuel 3:15



2Then Saul arose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph. 3And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* opposite Jeshimon, by the road. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. 4David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had indeed come.

5So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Now Saul lay within the camp, with the people encamped all around him. 6Then David answered, and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother of Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?"

And Abishai said, "I will go down with you."

7So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. 8Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not *have to strike* him a second time!"

9But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?" 10David said furthermore, "*As* the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish. 11The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that *are* by his head, and let us go." 12So David took the spear and the jug of water *by* Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw or knew *it* or awoke. For they *were* all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

13Now David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great distance *being* between them. 14And David called out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Do you not answer, Abner?"

Then Abner answered and said, "Who *are* you, calling out to the king?"

15So David said to Abner, "*Are* you not a man? And who *is* like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king. 16This thing that you have done *is* not good. *As* the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the jug of water that *was* by his head."

17Then Saul knew David's voice, and said, "*Is* that your voice, my son David?"

David said, "*It is* my voice, my lord, O king." 18And he said, "Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil *is* in my hand? 19Now therefore, please, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if *it is* the children of men, *may* they *be* cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' 20So now, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

21Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly."

22And David answered and said, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of the young men come over and get it. 23May the LORD repay every man *for* his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into *my* hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. 24And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation."

25Then Saul said to David, "*May* you *be* blessed, my son David! You shall both do great things and also still prevail."

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

David Allied with the Philistines

27 And David said in his heart, "Now
I shall perish someday by the hand
of Saul. *There is* nothing better for me than
that I should speedily escape to the land of
the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me,
to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So
I shall escape out of his hand." 2Then David
arose and went over with the six hundred
men who *were* with him to Achish the son of
Maoch, king of Gath. 3So David dwelt with
Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man
with his household, *and* David with his two
wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail
the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow. 4And it was
told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he
sought him no more.

5Then David said to Achish, "If I have
now found favor in your eyes, let them give
me a place in some town in the country,
that I may dwell there. For why should your
servant dwell in the royal city with you?" 6So
Achish gave him Ziklag that day. Therefore
Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah
to this day. 7Now the time that David dwelt
in the country of the Philistines was one
full year and four months.

8And David and his men went up and
raided the Geshurites, the Girzites,[a] and
the Amalekites. For those *nations* were the
inhabitants of the land from of old, as you
go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt.
9Whenever David attacked the land, he left
neither man nor woman alive, but took
away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the
camels, and the apparel, and returned and
came to Achish. 10Then Achish would say,
"Where have you made a raid today?" And
David would say, "Against the southern
area of Judah, or against the southern *area*
of the Jerahmeelites, or against the south-
ern *area* of the Kenites." 11David would save
neither man nor woman alive, to bring *news*
to Gath, saying, "Lest they should inform
on us, saying, 'Thus David did.'" And thus
was his behavior all the time he dwelt in
the country of the Philistines. 12So Achish
believed David, saying, "He has made his
people Israel utterly abhor him; therefore
he will be my servant forever."

28 Now it happened in those days
that the Philistines gathered their
armies together for war, to fight with Israel.
And Achish said to David, "You assuredly
know that you will go out with me to bat-
tle, you and your men."

2So David said to Achish, "Surely you
know what your servant can do."

And Achish said to David, "Therefore I
will make you one of my chief guardians
forever."

Saul Consults a Medium

3Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had
lamented for him and buried him in Ramah,
in his own city. And Saul had put the medi-
ums and the spiritists out of the land.

4Then the Philistines gathered together,
and came and encamped at Shunem. So
Saul gathered all Israel together, and they
encamped at Gilboa. 5When Saul saw the
army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and
his heart trembled greatly. 6And when Saul
inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not
answer him, either by dreams or by Urim
or by the prophets.

7Then Saul said to his servants, "Find
me a woman who is a medium, that I may
go to her and inquire of her."

And his servants said to him, "In fact,
there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor."

8So Saul disguised himself and put on
other clothes, and he went, and two men

27:8 [a]Or *Gezrites*



with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you."

9Then the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?"

10And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "*As* the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing."

11Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"

And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

12When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you *are* Saul!"

13And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?"

And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit[a] ascending out of the earth."

14So he said to her, "What *is* his form?"

And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he *is* covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground and bowed down.

15Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do."

16Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? 17And the LORD has done for Himself[a] as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. 19Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons *will be* with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

20Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night.

21And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled, and said to him, "Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice, and I have put my life in my hands and heeded the words which you spoke to me. 22Now therefore, please, heed also the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on *your* way."

23But he refused and said, "I will not eat."

So his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he heeded their voice. Then he arose from the ground and sat on the bed. 24Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house, and she hastened to kill it. And she took flour and kneaded *it,* and baked unleavened bread from it. 25So she brought *it* before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

The Philistines Reject David

29 Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel. 2And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish. 3Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What *are* these Hebrews *doing here?*"

And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "*Is* this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or these years? And to this day I have found no fault in him since he defected *to me.*"

4But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, "Make this fellow return, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him, and do not let him go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become our adversary. For with what could he reconcile himself to his master, if not with the heads of these men? 5*Is* this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying:

28:13 [a]Hebrew *elohim* **28:17** [a]Or *him,* that is, David

'Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands'?"[a]

6Then Achish called David and said to him, "Surely, *as* the LORD lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army *is* good in my sight. For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless the lords do not favor you. 7Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."

8So David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

9Then Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you *are* as good in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' 10Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master's servants who have come with you.[a] And as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart."

11So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

David's Conflict with the Amalekites

30 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, 2and had taken captive the women and those who *were* there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried *them* away and went their way. 3So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. 4Then David and the people who *were* with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. 6Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

7Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?"

And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake *them* and without fail recover *all*."

9So David went, he and the six hundred men who *were* with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. 10But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed *behind,* who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor.

11Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. 12And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. 13Then David said to him, "To whom do you *belong,* and where *are* you from?"

And he said, "I *am* a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. 14We made an invasion of the southern *area* of the Cherethites, in the *territory* which *belongs* to Judah, and of the southern *area* of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

15And David said to him, "Can you take me down to this troop?"

So he said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop."

16And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. 17Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode

29:5 [a]Compare 1 Samuel 18:7 **29:10** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint adds *and go to the place which I have selected for you there; and set no bothersome word in your heart, for you are good before me. And rise on your way.*

on camels and fled. [18]So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. [19]And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. [20]Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those *other* livestock, and said, "This *is* David's spoil."

[21]Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who *were* with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them. [22]Then all the wicked and worthless men[a] of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them *any* of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead *them* away and depart."

[23]But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. [24]For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part *is* who goes down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike." [25]So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

[26]Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent *some* of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD"— [27]to *those* who *were* in Bethel, *those* who *were* in Ramoth of the South, *those* who *were* in Jattir, [28]*those* who *were* in Aroer, *those* who *were* in Siphmoth, *those* who *were* in Eshtemoa, [29]*those* who *were* in Rachal, *those* who *were* in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, *those* who *were* in the cities of the Kenites, [30]*those* who *were* in Hormah, *those* who *were* in Chorashan,[a] *those* who *were* in Athach, [31]*those* who *were* in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to rove.

The Tragic End of Saul and His Sons

31 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. [2]Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. [3]The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers.

[4]Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me."

But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. [5]And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him. [6]So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that same day.

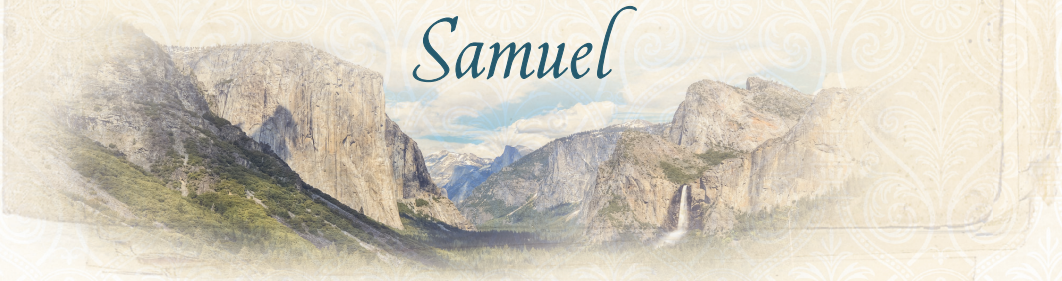
[7]And when the men of Israel who *were* on the other side of the valley, and *those* who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. [8]So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. [9]And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and sent *word* throughout the land of the Philistines, to proclaim *it in* the temple of their idols and among the people. [10]Then they put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.[a]

[11]Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, [12]all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. [13]Then they took their bones and buried *them* under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

30:22 [a]Literally *men of Belial* **30:30** [a]Or *Borashan* **31:10** [a]Spelled *Beth Shean* in Joshua 17:11 and elsewhere

THE SECOND BOOK OF

Samuel



The Report of Saul's Death

1 Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had stayed two days in Ziklag, 2on the third day, behold, it happened that a man came from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. So it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself.

3And David said to him, "Where have you come from?"

So he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel."

4Then David said to him, "How did the matter go? Please tell me."

And he answered, "The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."

5So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?"

6Then the young man who told him said, "As I happened by chance *to be* on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, leaning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. 7Now when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' 8And he said to me, 'Who *are* you?' So I answered him, 'I *am* an Amalekite.' 9He said to me again, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still *remains* in me.' 10So I stood over him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that *was* on his head and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them here to my lord."

11Therefore David took hold of his own clothes and tore them, and *so did* all the men who *were* with him. 12And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

13Then David said to the young man who told him, "Where *are* you from?"

And he answered, "I *am* the son of an alien, an Amalekite."

14So David said to him, "How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" 15Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go near, *and* execute him!" And he struck him so that he died. 16So David said to him, "Your blood *is* on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.'"

The Song of the Bow

17Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, 18and he told *them* to teach the children of Judah *the Song of* the Bow; indeed *it is* written in the Book of Jasher:

> *And he told them to teach the children of Judah the Song of the Bow.*
>
> 2 SAMUEL 1:18

19 "The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!
20 Tell *it* not in Gath,
Proclaim *it* not in the streets of Ashkelon—
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21 "O mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you,

Nor fields of offerings.
For the shield of the mighty is cast
away there!
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.
22 From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan did not turn
back,
And the sword of Saul did not return
empty.

23 "Saul and Jonathan *were* beloved and
pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not
divided;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

24 "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet, with
luxury;
Who put ornaments of gold on your
apparel.

25 "How the mighty have fallen in the
midst of the battle!
Jonathan *was* slain in your high places.
26 I am distressed for you, my brother
Jonathan;
You have been very pleasant to me;
Your love to me was wonderful,
Surpassing the love of women.

27 "How the mighty have fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!"

David Anointed King of Judah

2 It happened after this that David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?"
And the LORD said to him, "Go up."
David said, "Where shall I go up?"
And He said, "To Hebron."
2So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. 3And David brought up the men who *were* with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.
4Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, "The men of Jabesh Gilead *were the ones* who buried Saul." 5So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and said to them, "You *are* blessed of the LORD, for you have shown this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him. 6And now may the LORD show



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me; your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women. | 2 SAMUEL 1:26

There is nothing questionable about the love between Jonathan and David. There are four "loves" of women: there is the love of a mother; there is the love of a daughter; there is the love of a sister, and there is the love of a wife. The spiritual bond between David and Jonathan surpassed a mother's love for her children, a daughter's love for her mother, a sister's love for her siblings, and a wife's love for her husband. Oh, how wonderful is the love of a friend! It surpasses the love of women!

kindness and truth to you. I also will repay you this kindness, because you have done this thing. 7Now therefore, let your hands be strengthened, and be valiant; for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

Ishbosheth Made King of Israel

8But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth[a] the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim; 9and he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel. 10Ishbosheth, Saul's son, *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah followed David. 11And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

Israel and Judah at War

12Now Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 13And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out and met them by the pool of Gibeon. So they sat down, one on one side of the pool and the other on the other side of the pool. 14Then Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men now arise and compete before us."

And Joab said, "Let them arise."

15So they arose and went over by number, twelve from Benjamin, *followers* of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David. 16And each one grasped his opponent by the head and *thrust* his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called the Field of Sharp Swords,[a] which *is* in Gibeon. 17So there was a very fierce battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.

18Now the three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab and Abishai and Asahel. And Asahel *was as* fleet of foot as a wild gazelle. 19So Asahel pursued Abner, and in going he did not turn to the right hand or to the left from following Abner.

20Then Abner looked behind him and said, "*Are* you Asahel?"

He answered, "I *am*."

21And Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and lay hold on one of the young men and take his armor for yourself." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. 22So Abner said again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I face your brother Joab?" 23However, he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the blunt end of the spear, so that the spear came out of his back; and he fell down there and died on the spot. So it was *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still.

24Joab and Abishai also pursued Abner. And the sun was going down when they came to the hill of Ammah, which *is* before Giah by the road to the Wilderness of Gibeon. 25Now the children of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became a unit, and took their stand on top of a hill. 26Then Abner called to Joab and said, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the latter end? How long will it be then until you tell the people to return from pursuing their brethren?"

27And Joab said, "*As* God lives, unless you had spoken, surely then by morning all the people would have given up pursuing their brethren." 28So Joab blew a trumpet; and all the people stood still and did not pursue Israel anymore, nor did they fight anymore. 29Then Abner and his men went on all that night through the plain, crossed over the Jordan, and went through all Bithron; and they came to Mahanaim.

30So Joab returned from pursuing Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. 31But the servants of David had struck down, of Benjamin and Abner's men, three hundred and sixty men who died. 32Then they took up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb, which *was in* Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at daybreak.

3 Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

2:8 [a]Called *Esh-Baal* in 1 Chronicles 8:33 and 9:39 **2:16** [a]Hebrew *Helkath Hazzurim*

Sons of David

2 Sons were born to David in Hebron:
His firstborn was Amnon by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;
3 his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite;
the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur;
4 the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith;
the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;
5 and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah.
These were born to David in Hebron.

Abner Joins Forces with David

6 Now it was so, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was strengthening *his hold* on the house of Saul.

7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name *was* Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. So *Ishbosheth* said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

8 Then Abner became very angry at the words of Ishbosheth, and said, "*Am* I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David; and you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman? 9 May God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David as the LORD has sworn to him— 10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba." 11 And he could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

12 Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, "Whose *is* the land?" saying *also,* "Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand *shall be* with you to bring all Israel to you."

13 And *David* said, "Good, I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you: you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face." 14 So David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give *me* my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines." 15 And Ishbosheth sent and took her from *her* husband, from Paltiel[a] the son of Laish. 16 Then her husband went along with her to Bahurim, weeping behind her. So Abner said to him, "Go, return!" And he returned.

17 Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, "In time past you were seeking for David *to be* king over you. 18 Now then, do *it!* For the LORD has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of My servant David, I[a] will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and the hand of all their enemies.'" 19 And Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin. Then Abner also went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel and the whole house of Benjamin.

20 So Abner and twenty men with him came to David at Hebron. And David made a feast for Abner and the men who *were* with him. 21 Then Abner said to David, "I will arise and go, and gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may reign over all that your heart desires." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

Joab Murders Abner

22 At that moment the servants of David and Joab came from a raid and brought much spoil with them. But Abner *was* not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. 23 When Joab and all the troops that *were* with him had come, they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he sent him away, and he has gone in peace."

24 Then Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? Look, Abner came to you; why *is* it *that* you sent him away, and he has already gone? 25 Surely you realize that Abner the son of Ner came to deceive you, to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing."

26 And when Joab had gone from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, who brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know *it.* 27 Now when Abner had returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him privately, and there stabbed him in

3:15 [a]Spelled *Palti* in 1 Samuel 25:44 **3:18** [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum; Masoretic Text reads *he.*

the stomach, so that he died for the blood of Asahel his brother.

28 Afterward, when David heard *it,* he said, "My kingdom and I *are* guiltless before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. 29 Let it rest on the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and let there never fail to be in the house of Joab one who has a discharge or is a leper, who leans on a staff or falls by the sword, or who lacks bread." 30 So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

And the king sang a lament over Abner and said: "Should Abner die as a fool dies?"

2 SAMUEL 3:33

David's Mourning for Abner

31 Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes, gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn for Abner." And King David followed the coffin. 32 So they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept. 33 And the king sang *a lament* over Abner and said:

"Should Abner die as a fool dies?
34 Your hands were not bound
Nor your feet put into fetters;
As a man falls before wicked men, *so*
you fell."

Then all the people wept over him again.

35 And when all the people came to persuade David to eat food while it was still day, David took an oath, saying, "God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down!" 36 Now all the people took note *of it,* and it pleased them, since whatever the king did pleased all the people. 37 For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's *intent* to kill Abner the son of Ner. 38 Then the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? 39 And I *am* weak today, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, *are* too harsh for me. The LORD shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness."

Ishbosheth Is Murdered

4 When Saul's son[a] heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost heart, and all Israel was troubled. 2 Now Saul's son *had* two men *who were* captains of troops. The name of one *was* Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin. (For Beeroth also was *part* of Benjamin, 3 because the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been sojourners there until this day.)

4 Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *who was* lame in *his* feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel; and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. His name *was* Mephibosheth.[a]

5 Then the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out and came at about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who was lying on his bed at noon. 6 And they came there, all the way into the house, *as though* to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 7 For when they came into the house, he was lying on his bed in his bedroom; then they struck him and killed him, beheaded him and took his head, and were all night escaping through the plain. 8 And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul your enemy, who sought your life; and the LORD has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and his descendants."

9 But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "*As* the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all adversity, 10 when someone told me, saying, 'Look, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good news, I arrested him and had him executed in Ziklag—the one who *thought* I would give him a reward for *his*

4:1 [a]That is, Ishbosheth **4:4** [a]Called *Merib-Baal* in 1 Chronicles 8:34 and 9:40

news. 11How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and remove you from the earth?" 12So David commanded his young men, and they executed them, cut off their hands and feet, and hanged *them* by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried *it* in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

David Reigns over All Israel

5 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, "Indeed we *are* your bone and your flesh. 2Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" 3Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel. 4David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. 5In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

The Conquest of Jerusalem

6And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." 7Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that *is,* the City of David).

8Now David said on that day, "Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, *who are* hated by David's soul), *he shall be chief and captain.*"[a] Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

9Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo[a] and inward. 10So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him.

11Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house. 12So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

13And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. 14Now these *are* the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua,[a] Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15Ibhar, Elishua,[a] Nepheg, Japhia, 16Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

The Philistines Defeated

17Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard *of it* and went down to the stronghold. 18The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. 19So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?"

And the LORD said to David, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand."

20So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim.[a] 21And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away.

22Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. 23Therefore David inquired of the LORD, and He said, "You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. 24And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." 25And David did so, as the LORD commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba[a] as far as Gezer.

5:8 [a]Compare 1 Chronicles 11:6 **5:9** [a]Literally *The Landfill* **5:14** [a]Spelled *Shimea* in 1 Chronicles 3:5 **5:15** [a]Spelled *Elishama* in 1 Chronicles 3:6 **5:20** [a]Literally *Master of Breakthroughs* **5:25** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Gibeon.*

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

6 Again David gathered all *the* choice *men* of Israel, thirty thousand. 2And David arose and went with all the people who *were* with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name,[a] the LORD of Hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. 3So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart.[a] 4And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. 5Then David and all the house of Israel played *music* before the LORD on all kinds of *instruments of* fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.

> *Then David and all the house of Israel played music before the LORD on all kinds of instruments of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.*
>
> 2 SAMUEL 6:5

6And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out *his hand* to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. 7Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for *his* error; and he died there by the ark of God. 8And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah[a] to this day.

9David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" 10So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 11The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

12Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that *belongs* to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. 13And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. 14Then David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* wearing a linen ephod. 15So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

16Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. 17So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 18And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. 19Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece *of meat,* and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.

20Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"

6:2 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate omit *by the Name;* many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *there.* **6:3** [a]Septuagint adds *with the ark.* **6:8** [a]Literally *Outburst Against Uzzah*



So David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play music before the LORD.

2 SAMUEL 6:21

[21]So David said to Michal, "*It was* before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play *music* before the LORD. [22]And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor."

[23]Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

God's Covenant with David

7 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, [2]that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains."

[3]Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you."

[4]But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, [5]"Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? [6]For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. [7]Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'" ' [8]Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. [9]And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. [10]Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, [11]since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.[a]

[12]"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. [13]He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. [14]I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. [15]But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I removed from before you. [16]And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you.[a] Your throne shall be established forever." '"

[17]According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

David's Thanksgiving to God

[18]Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: "Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? [19]And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. *Is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? [20]Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord GOD, know Your servant. [21]For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know *them*. [22]Therefore You are great, O Lord GOD.[a] For *there is* none like You, nor *is there any* God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. [23]And who *is* like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself

7:11 [a]That is, a royal dynasty **7:16** [a]Septuagint reads *Me*. **7:22** [a]Targum and Syriac read *O LORD God*.

a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? 24For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.

25"Now, O LORD God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish *it* forever and do as You have said. 26So let Your name be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel.' And let the house of Your servant David be established before You. 27For You, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed *this* to Your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.

28"And now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant. 29Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord GOD, have spoken *it,* and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever."

David's Further Conquests

8 After this it came to pass that David attacked the Philistines and subdued them. And David took Metheg Ammah from the hand of the Philistines.

2Then he defeated Moab. Forcing them down to the ground, he measured them off with a line. With two lines he measured off those to be put to death, and with one full line those to be kept alive. So the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought tribute.

3David also defeated Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his territory at the River Euphrates. 4David took from him one thousand *chariots,* seven hundred[a] horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David hamstrung all the chariot *horses,* except that he spared *enough* of them for one hundred chariots.

5When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. 6Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, *and* brought tribute. So the LORD preserved David wherever he went. 7And David took the shields of gold that had belonged to the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8Also from Betah[a] and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took a large amount of bronze.

9When Toi[a] king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer, 10then Toi sent Joram[a] his son to King David, to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him (for Hadadezer had been at war with Toi); and *Joram* brought with him articles of silver, articles of gold, and articles of bronze. 11King David also dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he had subdued—12from Syria,[a] from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, from Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13And David made *himself* a name when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Syrians[a] in the Valley of Salt. 14He also put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

David's Administration

15So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment and justice to all his people. 16Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the army; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; 17Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar *were* the priests; Seraiah[a] *was* the scribe; 18Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief ministers.

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

9 Now David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

2And *there was* a servant of the house of Saul whose name *was* Ziba. So when they

8:4 [a]Or *seven thousand* (compare 1 Chronicles 18:4) **8:8** [a]Spelled *Tibhath* in 1 Chronicles 18:8 **8:9** [a]Spelled *Tou* in 1 Chronicles 18:9 **8:10** [a]Spelled *Hadoram* in 1 Chronicles 18:10 **8:12** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and some Hebrew manuscripts read *Edom.* **8:13** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and some Hebrew manuscripts read *Edomites* (compare 1 Chronicles 18:12). **8:17** [a]Spelled *Shavsha* in 1 Chronicles 18:16

had called him to David, the king said to him, "*Are* you Ziba?"

He said, "At your service!"

3Then the king said, "*Is* there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?"

And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan *who is* lame in *his* feet."

4So the king said to him, "Where *is* he?"

And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he *is* in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar."

5Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.

6Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, "Mephibosheth?"

And he answered, "Here is your servant!"

7So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually."

8Then he bowed himself, and said, "What *is* your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?"

9And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given to your master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. 10You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in *the harvest,* that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.



KELLY NELON CLARK • Homecoming Artist, *The Nelons*

"As for Mephibosheth," said the king, "he shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons." | 2 SAMUEL 9:11

At first glance this verse doesn't seem to have much significance. But in light of who this man was and where he came from, this is a beautiful illustration of the grace and lovingkindness of our heavenly Father.

In February 2010, we were in concert in Sacramento, California. At its conclusion the promoter and several volunteers wanted to take our group out to dinner; fifteen of us piled into several vehicles. When we arrived at the restaurant, my husband, Jason, and I stepped out of our van and were both startled when a lady jumped out of the bushes grabbing Jason by his pant legs, falling to her knees, sobbing and pleading, "Please sir, help me! Please help me!" Though alarmed, Jason asked her to stand to tell us her problem. With tears she explained how she and her two small children had recently left Chicago with just enough money for one-way bus tickets to Sacramento on the promise of a job. When she showed up for work, the employer surprisingly said there was no job! She had left everything and had nothing, not even enough money to feed herself and her small children. We saw the tent next door in an abandoned parking lot where she and her children were living. On day number three with no food, she told us, she prayed God would send someone to "show her kindness."

[11]Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do."

"As for Mephibosheth," *said the king,* "he shall eat at my table[a] like one of the king's sons." [12]Mephibosheth had a young son whose name *was* Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants of Mephibosheth. [13]So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

The Ammonites and Syrians Defeated

10 It happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. [2]Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me."

So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the people of Ammon. [3]And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not *rather* sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"

[4]Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. [5]When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at

9:11 [a]Septuagint reads *David's table.*

Living under these conditions she didn't look or even smell presentable as we invited her to join us at dinner. As we made our way into the restaurant, the hostess allowed our party of fifteen to walk right in, but when Jenny came following, the hostess held out her arm as if to stop her from entering. At this moment Jason looked at the surprised employee and simply said, "She's with us." As we took our seats around this long dining table in a reserved room with fifteen people in their Sunday best clothes, there sat our new friend Jenny. I watched intently as Jenny folded the napkin neatly in her lap, meticulously arranging her silverware, sitting with perfect posture, speaking with impeccable manners to our server. We enjoyed her company and her warm personality so much. She belonged at that table just as much as any of us did. She was the center of attention as we all were amazed at her journey and story of perseverance.

Mephibosheth, Jenny, and I have a lot in common. Mephibosheth didn't belong at King David's table, but David sought him out and had him live in the palace to show him kindness for Jonathan's (his father's) sake. Mephibosheth also had two crippled feet and could not help himself. But if we were to walk into that royal dining room and see the king accompanied by family and friends, no one would ever notice the lameness of Mephibosheth. He was a king's son, at the king's table, covered by royalty!

One day I'll be sitting at a table for a dinner called the marriage supper of the Lamb. I, too, would not belong at this table were it not for God showing me kindness on behalf of His Son Jesus' sake. Mephibosheth, Jenny, and I aren't that different after all; we eat at the King's table, and, best of all, we belong there!

Jericho until your beards have grown, and *then* return."

6When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. 7Now when David heard *of it,* he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. 8Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah *were* by themselves in the field.

9When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put *them* in battle array against the Syrians. 10And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, that he might set *them* in battle array against the people of Ammon. 11Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. 12Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do *what is* good in His sight."

13So Joab and the people who *were* with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 14When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai, and entered the city. So Joab returned from the people of Ammon and went to Jerusalem.

15When the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered together. 16Then Hadadezer[a] sent and brought out the Syrians who *were* beyond the River,[b] and they came to Helam. And Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army *went* before them. 17When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in battle array against David and fought with him. 18Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there. 19And when all the kings *who were* servants to Hadadezer[a] saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Syrians were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore.

David, Bathsheba, and Uriah

11 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out *to battle,* that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

2Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman *was* very beautiful to behold. 3So David sent and inquired about the woman. And *someone* said, "*Is* this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. 5And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I *am* with child."

6Then David sent to Joab, *saying,* "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. 7When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. 8And David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift *of food* from the king followed him. 9But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. 10So when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"

11And Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? *As* you live, and *as* your soul lives, I will not do this thing."

10:16 [a]Hebrew *Hadarezer* [b]That is, the Euphrates **10:19** [a]Hebrew *Hadarezer*

12Then David said to Uriah, "Wait here
today also, and tomorrow I will let you
depart." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem
that day and the next. 13Now when David
called him, he ate and drank before him; and
he made him drunk. And at evening he went
out to lie on his bed with the servants of his
lord, but he did not go down to his house.

14In the morning it happened that
David wrote a letter to Joab and sent *it* by
the hand of Uriah. 15And he wrote in the
letter, saying, "Set Uriah in the forefront
of the hottest battle, and retreat from him,
that he may be struck down and die." 16So
it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he
assigned Uriah to a place where he knew
there *were* valiant men. 17Then the men of
the city came out and fought with Joab.
And *some* of the people of the servants of
David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

18Then Joab sent and told David all the
things concerning the war, 19and charged
the messenger, saying, "When you have
finished telling the matters of the war to
the king, 20if it happens that the king's
wrath rises, and he says to you: 'Why did
you approach so near to the city when
you fought? Did you not know that they
would shoot from the wall? 21Who struck
Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth?[a] Was
it not a woman who cast a piece of a mill-
stone on him from the wall, so that he
died in Thebez? Why did you go near the
wall?'—then you shall say, 'Your servant
Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"

22So the messenger went, and came and
told David all that Joab had sent by him.
23And the messenger said to David, "Surely
the men prevailed against us and came out
to us in the field; then we drove them back
as far as the entrance of the gate. 24The
archers shot from the wall at your servants;
and *some* of the king's servants are dead, and
your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."

25Then David said to the messenger,
"Thus you shall say to Joab: 'Do not let this
thing displease you, for the sword devours
one as well as another. Strengthen your
attack against the city, and overthrow it.'
So encourage him."

26When the wife of Uriah heard that
Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned
for her husband. 27And when her mourning
was over, David sent and brought her to his
house, and she became his wife and bore
him a son. But the thing that David had
done displeased the LORD.

Nathan's Parable and David's Confession

12 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David.
And he came to him, and said to
him: "There were two men in one city, one
rich and the other poor. 2The rich *man* had
exceedingly many flocks and herds. 3But
the poor *man* had nothing, except one
little ewe lamb which he had bought and
nourished; and it grew up together with
him and with his children. It ate of his own
food and drank from his own cup and lay
in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to
him. 4And a traveler came to the rich man,
who refused to take from his own flock and
from his own herd to prepare one for the
wayfaring man who had come to him; but
he took the poor man's lamb and prepared
it for the man who had come to him."

5So David's anger was greatly aroused
against the man, and he said to Nathan,
"*As* the LORD lives, the man who has done
this shall surely die! 6And he shall restore
fourfold for the lamb, because he did this
thing and because he had no pity."

7Then Nathan said to David, "You *are*
the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel:
'I anointed you king over Israel, and I deliv-
ered you from the hand of Saul. 8I gave
you your master's house and your mas-
ter's wives into your keeping, and gave you
the house of Israel and Judah. And if *that
had been* too little, I also would have given
you much more! 9Why have you despised
the commandment of the LORD, to do evil
in His sight? You have killed Uriah the
Hittite with the sword; you have taken his
wife *to be* your wife, and have killed him
with the sword of the people of Ammon.
10Now therefore, the sword shall never
depart from your house, because you have
despised Me, and have taken the wife of
Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' 11Thus
says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adver-
sity against you from your own house; and
I will take your wives before your eyes and
give *them* to your neighbor, and he shall
lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.

11:21 [a]Same as *Jerubbaal* (Gideon), Judges 6:32ff

12 For you did *it* secretly, but I will do this
thing before all Israel, before the sun.'"
13 So David said to Nathan, "I have
sinned against the LORD."

And Nathan said to David, "The LORD
also has put away your sin; you shall not
die. 14 However, because by this deed you
have given great occasion to the enemies
of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also
who is born to you shall surely die." 15 Then
Nathan departed to his house.

The Death of David's Son

And the LORD struck the child that
Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became
ill. 16 David therefore pleaded with God for
the child, and David fasted and went in and
lay all night on the ground. 17 So the elders
of his house arose *and went* to him, to raise
him up from the ground. But he would not,
nor did he eat food with them. 18 Then on
the seventh day it came to pass that the
child died. And the servants of David were
afraid to tell him that the child was dead.
For they said, "Indeed, while the child was
alive, we spoke to him, and he would not
heed our voice. How can we tell him that
the child is dead? He may do some harm!"
19 When David saw that his servants
were whispering, David perceived that the
child was dead. Therefore David said to his
servants, "Is the child dead?"

And they said, "He is dead."
20 So David arose from the ground,
washed and anointed himself, and changed
his clothes; and he went into the house of
the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to
his own house; and when he requested,
they set food before him, and he ate. 21 Then
his servants said to him, "What *is* this that
you have done? You fasted and wept for
the child *while he was* alive, but when the
child died, you arose and ate food."

22 And he said, "While the child was
alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who
can tell *whether* the LORD[a] will be gracious
to me, that the child may live?' 23 But now
he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring
him back again? I shall go to him, but he
shall not return to me."

Solomon Is Born

24 Then David comforted Bathsheba his
wife, and went in to her and lay with her.
So she bore a son, and he[a] called his name
Solomon. Now the LORD loved him, 25 and
He sent *word* by the hand of Nathan the
prophet: So he[a] called his name Jedidiah,[b]
because of the LORD.

Rabbah Is Captured

26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the
people of Ammon, and took the royal city.
27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and
said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and
I have taken the city's water *supply.* 28 Now
therefore, gather the rest of the people
together and encamp against the city and
take it, lest I take the city and it be called
after my name." 29 So David gathered all the
people together and went to Rabbah, fought
against it, and took it. 30 Then he took their
king's crown from his head. Its weight *was*
a talent of gold, with precious stones. And
it was *set* on David's head. Also he brought
out the spoil of the city in great abundance.
31 And he brought out the people who *were*
in it, and put *them to work* with saws and iron
picks and iron axes, and made them cross
over to the brick works. So he did to all the
cities of the people of Ammon. Then David
and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

12:22 [a]A few Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *God.* **12:24** [a]Following Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Qere, a few Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Targum read *she.* **12:25** [a]Qere, some Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Targum read *she.* [b]Literally *Beloved of the* LORD



Amnon and Tamar

13 After this Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. 2Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became sick; for she *was* a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her. 3But Amnon had a friend whose name *was* Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Now Jonadab *was* a very crafty man. 4And he said to him, "Why *are* you, the king's son, becoming thinner day after day? Will you not tell me?"

Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

5So Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see *it* and eat it from her hand.'" 6Then Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill; and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let Tamar my sister come and make a couple of cakes for me in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

7And David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Now go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him." 8So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. Then she took flour and kneaded *it*, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. 9And she took the pan and placed *them* out before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, "Have everyone go out from me." And they all went out from him. 10Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* to Amnon her brother in the bedroom. 11Now when she had brought *them* to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister."

12But she answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing! 13And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." 14However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her.

15Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her *was* greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone!"

16So she said to him, "No, indeed! This evil of sending me away *is* worse than the other that you did to me."

But he would not listen to her. 17Then he called his servant who attended him, and said, "Here! Put this *woman* out, away from me, and bolt the door behind her." 18Now she had on a robe of many colors, for the king's virgin daughters wore such apparel. And his servant put her out and bolted the door behind her.

19Then Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore her robe of many colors that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head and went away crying bitterly. 20And Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now hold your peace, my sister. He *is* your brother; do not take this thing to heart." So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

21But when King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. 22And Absalom spoke to his brother Amnon neither good nor bad. For Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

Absalom Murders Amnon

23And it came to pass, after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal Hazor, which *is* near Ephraim; so Absalom invited all the king's sons. 24Then Absalom came to the king and said, "Kindly note, your servant has sheepshearers; please, let the king and his servants go with your servant."

25But the king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go now, lest we be a burden to you." Then he urged him, but he would not go; and he blessed him.

26Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us."

And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?" 27But Absalom urged him; so he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "Watch now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon!' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and valiant." 29 So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each one got on his mule and fled.

30 And it came to pass, while they were on the way, that news came to David, saying, "Absalom has killed all the king's sons, and not one of them is left!" 31 So the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn. 32 Then Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered and said, "Let not my lord suppose they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for only Amnon is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. 33 Now therefore, let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead. For only Amnon is dead."

Absalom Flees to Geshur

34 Then Absalom fled. And the young man who was keeping watch lifted his eyes and looked, and there, many people were coming from the road on the hillside behind him.[a] 35 And Jonadab said to the king, "Look, the king's sons are coming; as your servant said, so it is." 36 So it was, as soon as he had finished speaking, that the king's sons indeed came, and they lifted up their voice and wept. Also the king and all his servants wept very bitterly.

37 But Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day. 38 So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. 39 And King David[a] longed to go to[b] Absalom. For he had been comforted concerning Amnon, because he was dead.

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem

14 So Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* concerned about Absalom. 2 And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. 3 Go to the king and speak to him in this manner." So Joab put the words in her mouth.

4 And when the woman of Tekoa spoke[a] to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, "Help, O king!"

5 Then the king said to her, "What troubles you?"

And she answered, "Indeed I *am* a widow, my husband is dead. 6 Now your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought with each other in the field, and *there was* no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him. 7 And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant, and they said, 'Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also.' So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband *neither* name nor remnant on the earth."

8 Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you."

9 And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord, O king, *let* the iniquity *be* on me and on my father's house, and the king and his throne *be* guiltless."

10 So the king said, "Whoever says *anything* to you, bring him to me, and he shall not touch you anymore."

11 Then she said, "Please let the king remember the LORD your God, and do not permit the avenger of blood to destroy anymore, lest they destroy my son."

And he said, "*As* the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground."

12 Therefore the woman said, "Please, let your maidservant speak *another* word to my lord the king."

And he said, "Say on."

13 So the woman said: "Why then have you schemed such a thing against the people of God? For the king speaks this thing as one

13:34 [a]Septuagint adds *And the watchman went and told the king, and said, "I see men from the way of Horonaim, from the regions of the mountains."* **13:39** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the spirit of the king;* Targum reads *the soul of King David.* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *ceased to pursue after.* **14:4** [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *came.*

who is guilty, *in that* the king does not bring his banished one home again. 14For we will surely die and *become* like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him. 15Now therefore, I have come to speak of this thing to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. And your maidservant said, 'I will now speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant. 16For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man *who would* destroy me and my son together from the inheritance of God.' 17Your maidservant said, 'The word of my lord the king will now be comforting; for as the angel of God, so *is* my lord the king in discerning good and evil. And may the LORD your God be with you.'"

18Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you."

And the woman said, "Please, let my lord the king speak."

19So the king said, "*Is* the hand of Joab with you in all this?" And the woman answered and said, "*As* you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. For your servant Joab commanded me, and he put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant. 20To bring about this change of affairs your servant Joab has done this thing; but my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of the angel of God, to know everything that *is* in the earth."

21And the king said to Joab, "All right, I have granted this thing. Go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom."

22Then Joab fell to the ground on his face and bowed himself, and thanked the king. And Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord, O king, in that the king has fulfilled the request of his servant." 23So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 24And the king said, "Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face." So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king's face.

David Forgives Absalom

25Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. 26And when he cut the hair of his head—at the end of every year he cut *it* because it was heavy on him—when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king's standard. 27To Absalom were born three sons, and one daughter whose name *was* Tamar. She was a woman of beautiful appearance.

28And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, but did not see the king's face. 29Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. And when he sent again the second time, he would not come. 30So he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31Then Joab arose and came to Absalom's house, and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

32And Absalom answered Joab, "Look, I sent to you, saying, 'Come here, so that I may send you to the king, to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? *It would be* better for me *to be* there still." ' Now therefore, let me see the king's face; but if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me."

33So Joab went to the king and told him. And when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king. Then the king kissed Absalom.

Absalom's Treason

15 After this it happened that Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. 2Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. *So* it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city *are* you from?" And he would say, "Your servant *is* from such and such a tribe of Israel." 3Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case *is* good and right; but *there is* no deputy of the king to hear you." 4Moreover Absalom would say,

"Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." 5And *so* it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. 6In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7Now it came to pass after forty[a] years that Absalom said to the king, "Please, let me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I made to the LORD. 8For your servant took a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, saying, 'If the LORD indeed brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'"

9And the king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron.

10Then Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'" 11And with Absalom went two hundred men invited from Jerusalem, and they went along innocently and did not know anything. 12Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city—from Giloh—while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number.

David Escapes from Jerusalem

13Now a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

14So David said to all his servants who *were* with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

15And the king's servants said to the king, "We *are* your servants, *ready to do* whatever my lord the king commands." 16Then the king went out with all his household after him. But the king left ten women, concubines, to keep the house. 17And the king went out with all the people after him, and stopped at the outskirts. 18Then all his servants passed before him; and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king.

19Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you *are* a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. 20In fact, you came *only* yesterday. Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where? Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth *be* with you."

21But Ittai answered the king and said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be."

22So David said to Ittai, "Go, and cross over." Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all the little ones who *were* with him crossed over. 23And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness.

24There was Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up until all the people had finished crossing over from the city. 25Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back and show me *both* it and His dwelling place. 26But if He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him." 27The king also said to Zadok the priest, "*Are* you *not* a seer? Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. 28See, I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." 29Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem. And they remained there.

30So David went up by the Ascent of the *Mount of* Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who *were* with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. 31Then *someone* told David, saying, "Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom." And David

15:7 [a]Septuagint manuscripts, Syriac, and Josephus read *four.*

To All the Poets

GLORIA GAITHER

To all the poets I have known
Who saw the beauty in the commonplace
Saw incarnation in a baby's face
And in a drop of rain, the stars . . .
When there was mud and blood and tears,
You sang a song at night to calm our fears
You made a moment last a thousand years—
Thank God for poets I have known.

You go on dreaming after dreams all fade.
When friends desert, you are the ones who stayed
To write the prayers when every prayer'd been prayed;
You are the poets I have known.

To all the poets I have known:
You built a kingdom out of sea and sand,
You conquered armies with a marching band,
You carved a galaxy in stone—
You built an altar out of bread
And spent your soul to see the children fed.
You wove your heart in every story read—
You lovely poets I have known.

You walking wounded of my life
Who bled compassion in the heat of strife,
Who stood between my heart and Satan's knife
With just the armor of a song—
You are the heroes and the brave
Who with a slender pen our passions save
And chisel epitaphs upon the grave
Of all the poets I have known.

said, "O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!"

32 Now it happened when David had come to the top *of the mountain,* where he worshiped God—there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. 33 David said to him, "If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. 34 But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; *as* I *was* your father's servant previously, so I *will* now also *be* your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. 35 And *do* you not *have* Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be *that* whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 36 Indeed *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's *son,* and Jonathan, Abiathar's *son;* and by them you shall send me everything you hear."

37 So Hushai, David's friend, went into the city. And Absalom came into Jerusalem.

Mephibosheth's Servant

16 When David was a little past the top *of the mountain,* there was Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, who met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them two hundred *loaves* of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred summer fruits, and a skin of wine. 2 And the king said to Ziba, "What do you mean to do with these?"

So Ziba said, "The donkeys *are* for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who are faint in the wilderness to drink."

3 Then the king said, "And where *is* your master's son?"

And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.'"

4 So the king said to Ziba, "Here, all that *belongs* to Mephibosheth *is* yours."

And Ziba said, "I humbly bow before you, *that* I may find favor in your sight, my lord, O king!"

Shimei Curses David

5 Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came. 6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men *were* on his right hand and on his left. 7 Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! 8 The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you *are caught* in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!"

9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!"

10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now *may this* Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. 12 It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction,[a] and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day." 13 And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust. 14 Now the king and all the people who *were* with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there.

The Advice of Ahithophel

15 Meanwhile Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem; and Ahithophel *was* with him. 16 And so it was, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, "*Long* live the king! *Long* live the king!"

17 So Absalom said to Hushai, "*Is* this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?"

16:12 [a]Following Kethib, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Qere reads *my eyes;* Targum reads *tears of my eyes.*

18 And Hushai said to Absalom, "No, but whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel choose, his I will be, and with him I will remain. 19 Furthermore, whom should I serve? *Should I* not *serve* in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence."

20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give advice as to what we should do."

21 And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong." 22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

23 Now the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, *was* as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So *was* all the advice of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

17 Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Now let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. 2 I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weak, and make him afraid. And all the people who *are* with him will flee, and I will strike only the king. 3 Then I will bring back all the people to you. When all return except the man whom you seek, all the people will be at peace." 4 And the saying pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

The Advice of Hushai

5 Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he says too." 6 And when Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom spoke to him, saying, "Ahithophel has spoken in this manner. Shall we do as he says? If not, speak up."

7 So Hushai said to Absalom: "The advice that Ahithophel has given *is* not good at this time. 8 For," said Hushai, "you know your father and his men, that they *are* mighty men, and they *are* enraged in their minds, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field; and your father *is* a man of war, and will not camp with the people. 9 Surely by now he is hidden in some pit, or in some *other* place. And it will be, when some of them are overthrown at the first, that whoever hears *it* will say, 'There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.' 10 And even he *who is* valiant, whose heart *is* like the heart of a lion, will melt completely. For all Israel knows that your father *is* a mighty man, and *those* who *are* with him *are* valiant men. 11 Therefore I advise that all Israel be fully gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, like the sand that *is* by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person. 12 So we will come upon him in some place where he may be found, and we will fall on him as the dew falls on the ground. And of him and all the men who *are* with him there shall not be left so much as one. 13 Moreover, if he has withdrawn into a city, then all Israel shall bring ropes to that city; and we will pull it into the river, until there is not one small stone found there."

14 So Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the advice of Ahithophel." For the LORD had purposed to defeat the good advice of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring disaster on Absalom.

Hushai Warns David to Escape

15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, "Thus and so Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so I have advised. 16 Now therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying, 'Do not spend this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily cross over, lest the king and all the people who *are* with him be swallowed up.'" 17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed at En Rogel, for they dared not be seen coming into the city; so a female servant would come and tell them, and they would go and tell King David. 18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom. But both of them went away quickly and came to a man's house in Bahurim, who had a well in his court; and they went down into it. 19 Then the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground grain on it; and the thing was not known. 20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, "Where *are* Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

So the woman said to them, "They have gone over the water brook."

And when they had searched and could not find *them,* they returned to Jerusalem. 21Now it came to pass, after they had departed, that they came up out of the well and went and told King David, and said to David, "Arise and cross over the water quickly. For thus has Ahithophel advised against you." 22So David and all the people who *were* with him arose and crossed over the Jordan. By morning light not one of them was left who had not gone over the Jordan.

23Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father's tomb.

24Then David went to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. 25And Absalom made Amasa captain of the army instead of Joab. This Amasa *was* the son of a man whose name *was* Jithra,[a] an Israelite,[b] who had gone in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. 26So Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.

27Now it happened, when David had come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the people of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, 28brought beds and basins, earthen vessels and wheat, barley and flour, parched *grain* and beans, lentils and parched *seeds,* 29honey and curds, sheep and cheese of the herd, for David and the people who *were* with him to eat. For they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness."

Absalom's Defeat and Death

18 And David numbered the people who *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. 2Then David sent out one third of the people under the hand of Joab, one third under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, "I also will surely go out with you myself."

3But the people answered, "You shall not go out! For if we flee away, they will not care about us; nor if half of us die, will they care about us. But *you are* worth ten thousand of us now. For you are now more help to us in the city."

4Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. 5Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, "*Deal* gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom.

6So the people went out into the field of battle against Israel. And the battle was in the woods of Ephraim. 7The people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David, and a great slaughter of twenty thousand took place there that day. 8For the battle there was scattered over the face of the whole countryside, and the woods devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on a mule. The mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his head caught in the terebinth; so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule which *was* under him went on. 10Now a certain man saw *it* and told Joab, and said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!"

11So Joab said to the man who told him, "You just saw *him!* And why did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten *shekels* of silver and a belt."

12But the man said to Joab, "Though I were to receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son. For in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Beware lest anyone *touch* the young man Absalom!'[a] 13Otherwise I would have dealt falsely against my own life. For there is nothing hidden from the king, and you yourself would have set yourself against *me.*"

14Then Joab said, "I cannot linger with you." And he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom's heart,

17:25 [a]Spelled *Jether* in 1 Chronicles 2:17 and elsewhere [b]Following Masoretic Text, some manuscripts of the Septuagint, and Targum; some manuscripts of the Septuagint read *Ishmaelite* (compare 1 Chronicles 2:17); Vulgate reads *of Jezrael.* **18:12** [a]The ancient versions read *'Protect the young man Absalom for me!'*

while he was *still* alive in the midst of the terebinth tree. [15]And ten young men who bore Joab's armor surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him.

[16]So Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel. For Joab held back the people. [17]And they took Absalom and cast him into a large pit in the woods, and laid a very large heap of stones over him. Then all Israel fled, everyone to his tent.

[18]Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up a pillar for himself, which *is* in the King's Valley. For he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." He called the pillar after his own name. And to this day it is called Absalom's Monument.

David Hears of Absalom's Death

[19]Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the LORD has avenged him of his enemies."

[20]And Joab said to him, "You shall not take the news this day, for you shall take the news another day. But today you shall take no news, because the king's son is dead." [21]Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran.

[22]And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite."

So Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?"

[23]"But whatever happens," *he said,* "let me run."

So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.

[24]Now David was sitting between the two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, to the wall, lifted his eyes and looked, and there was a man, running alone. [25]Then the watchman cried out and told the king. And the king said, "If he *is* alone, *there is* news in his mouth." And he came rapidly and drew near.

[26]Then the watchman saw *another* man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "There is *another* man, running alone!"

And the king said, "He also brings news."

[27]So the watchman said, "I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok."

And the king said, "He *is* a good man, and comes with good news."

[28]So Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, "All is well!" Then he bowed down with his face to the earth before the king, and said, "Blessed *be* the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!"

[29]The king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant and *me* your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what *it was about*."

[30]And the king said, "Turn aside *and* stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.

[31]Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, "There is good news, my lord the king! For the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you."

[32]And the king said to the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

So the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like *that* young man!"

David's Mourning for Absalom

[33]Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: "O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!"

19 And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." [2]So the victory that day was *turned* into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his son." [3]And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. [4]But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

[5]Then Joab came into the house to the king, and said, "Today you have disgraced all your servants who today have saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your

concubines, [6]in that you love your enemies and hate your friends. For you have declared today that you regard neither princes nor servants; for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well. [7]Now therefore, arise, go out and speak comfort to your servants. For I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you this night. And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now." [8]Then the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people, saying, "There is the king, sitting in the gate." So all the people came before the king.

For everyone of Israel had fled to his tent.

David Returns to Jerusalem

[9]Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king saved us from the hand of our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land because of Absalom. [10]But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?"

[11]So King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king, to his *very* house? [12]You *are* my brethren, you *are* my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' [13]And say to Amasa, '*Are* you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if you are not commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab.'" [14]So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as *the heart of* one man, so that they sent *this word* to the king: "Return, you and all your servants!"

[15]Then the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan. [16]And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, who *was* from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David. [17]*There were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over the Jordan before the king. [18]Then a ferryboat went across to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good.

David's Mercy to Shimei

Now Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan. [19]Then he said to the king, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take *it* to heart. [20]For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

[21]But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?"

[22]And David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I *am* king over Israel?" [23]Therefore the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king swore to him.

David and Mephibosheth Meet

[24]Now Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace. [25]So it was, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

[26]And he answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go to the king,' because your servant *is* lame. [27]And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king, but my lord the king *is* like the angel of God. Therefore do *what is* good in your eyes. [28]For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table. Therefore what right have I still to cry out anymore to the king?"

[29]So the king said to him, "Why do you

Time for Separating

GLORIA GAITHER

Thank God for fall—
The time for letting go
Of all for which the sowing work
was done,
The labor in the sun,
The watering and weeding,
The nurture of the seedling,
And praying for the rain,
Through all the spring and summer.
The hope that made the waiting
Worth the wait
Has been anticipating
This fine day
When seedlings stood up strong
On stalks that bore the weight
Of lovely buds and blossoms
Of their own.
And all along we knew
There'd be a separating,
A time when roots reached deep
Into the soil
To nurture what we'd planted.

The labor and the toil—
That happiest of work—
Would be much less demanding,
And there'd be time for standing
In the sunset
Hand in hand.

So, here it is, the fall,
The time for separating;
Yet, nothing's lost at all,
And nothing disappears
This harvest time of year;
And, yes, there's time
For savoring the joy,
For storing in the heart
And filling up the soul's wide granaries
With what has grown to be,
The fruit of finest dreams.

We sift the kernels through our hands
And sing
To find them pregnant with the spring!

speak anymore of your matters? I have said, 'You and Ziba divide the land.'"

30Then Mephibosheth said to the king, "Rather, let him take it all, inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house."

David's Kindness to Barzillai

31And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king, to escort him across the Jordan. 32Now Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. And he had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he *was* a very rich man. 33And the king said to Barzillai, "Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem."

34But Barzillai said to the king, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? 35I *am* today eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? 36Your servant will go a little way across the Jordan with the king. And why should the king repay me *with* such a reward? 37Please let your servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you."

38And the king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you. Now whatever you request of me, I will do for you." 39Then all the people went over the Jordan. And when the king had crossed over, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own place.

The Quarrel About the King

40Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham[a] went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and also half the people of Israel. 41Just then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, "Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king, his household, and all David's men with him across the Jordan?"

42So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king *is* a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king's *expense?* Or has he given us any gift?"

43And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, "We have ten shares in the king; therefore we also have more *right* to David than you. Why then do you despise us—were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?"

Yet the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

The Rebellion of Sheba

20 And there happened to be there a rebel,[a] whose name *was* Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet, and said:

"We have no share in David,
Nor do we have inheritance in the son
of Jesse;
Every man to his tents, O Israel!"

2So every man of Israel deserted David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah, from the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, remained loyal to their king.

3Now David came to his house at Jerusalem. And the king took the ten women, his concubines whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in seclusion and supported them, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4And the king said to Amasa, "Assemble the men of Judah for me within three days, and be present here yourself." 5So Amasa went to assemble *the men of* Judah. But he delayed longer than the set time which David had appointed him. 6And David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he find for himself fortified cities, and escape us." 7So Joab's men, with the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and all the mighty men, went out after him. And they went out of Jerusalem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

19:40 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Chimhan.* **20:1** [a]Literally *man of Belial*

8When they *were* at the large stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa came before them. Now Joab was dressed in battle armor; on it was a belt *with* a sword fastened in its sheath at his hips; and as he was going forward, it fell out. 9Then Joab said to Amasa, "*Are* you in health, my brother?" And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. 10But Amasa did not notice the sword that *was* in Joab's hand. And he struck him with it in the stomach, and his entrails poured out on the ground; and he did not *strike* him again. Thus he died.

Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri. 11Meanwhile one of Joab's men stood near Amasa, and said, "Whoever favors Joab and whoever *is* for David—follow Joab!" 12But Amasa wallowed in *his* blood in the middle of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he moved Amasa from the highway to the field and threw a garment over him, when he saw that everyone who came upon him halted. 13When he was removed from the highway, all the people went on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

14And he went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel and Beth Maachah and all the Berites. So they were gathered together and also went after *Sheba*.[a] 15Then they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth Maachah; and they cast up a siege mound against the city, and it stood by the rampart. And all the people who *were* with Joab battered the wall to throw it down.

16Then a wise woman cried out from the city, "Hear, hear! Please say to Joab, 'Come nearby, that I may speak with you.'" 17When he had come near to her, the woman said, "*Are* you Joab?"

He answered, "I *am*."

Then she said to him, "Hear the words of your maidservant."

And he answered, "I am listening."

18So she spoke, saying, "They used to talk in former times, saying, 'They shall surely seek *guidance* at Abel,' and so they would end *disputes*. 19I *am among the* peaceable *and* faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?"

20And Joab answered and said, "Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy! 21That *is* not so. But a man from the mountains of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has raised his hand against the king, against David. Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city."

So the woman said to Joab, "Watch, his head will be thrown to you over the wall." 22Then the woman in her wisdom went to all the people. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw *it* out to Joab. Then he blew a trumpet, and they withdrew from the city, every man to his tent. So Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

David's Government Officers

23And Joab *was* over all the army of Israel; Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; 24Adoram *was* in charge of revenue; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; 25Sheva *was* scribe; Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests; 26and Ira the Jairite was a chief minister under David.

David Avenges the Gibeonites

21 Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, "*It is* because of Saul and *his* bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites." 2So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.

3Therefore David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?"

4And the Gibeonites said to him, "We will have no silver or gold from Saul or from his house, nor shall you kill any man in Israel for us."

So he said, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."

5Then they answered the king, "As for the man who consumed us and plotted against us, *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the territories of Israel, 6let seven men of his descendants be delivered

20:14 [a]Literally *him*

to us, and we will hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, *whom* the LORD chose."

And the king said, "I will give *them.*"

7But the king spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. 8So the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, and the five sons of Michal[a] the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite; 9and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the hill before the LORD. So they fell, *all* seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first *days,* in the beginning of barley harvest.

10Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.

11And David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. 12Then David went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of Jabesh Gilead who had stolen them from the street of Beth Shan,[a] where the Philistines had hung them up, after the Philistines had struck down Saul in Gilboa. 13So he brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there; and they gathered the bones of those who had been hanged. 14They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the tomb of Kish his father. So they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God heeded the prayer for the land.

Philistine Giants Destroyed

15When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint. 16Then Ishbi-Benob, who *was* one of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose bronze spear *was* three hundred *shekels,* who was bearing a new *sword,* thought he could kill David. 17But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel."

18Now it happened afterward that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Saph,[a] who *was* one of the sons of the giant. 19Again there was war at Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-Oregim[a] the Bethlehemite killed *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.

20Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of *great* stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was born to the giant. 21So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea,[a] David's brother, killed him.

22These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.

2 SAMUEL 22:1

Praise for God's Deliverance

22 Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. 2And he said:[a]

"The LORD *is* my rock and my fortress
and my deliverer;
3 The God of my strength, in whom I will
trust;
My shield and the horn of my
salvation,
My stronghold and my refuge;

21:8 [a]Or *Merab* (compare 1 Samuel 18:19 and 25:44; 2 Samuel 3:14 and 6:23) **21:12** [a]Spelled *Beth Shean* in Joshua 17:11 and elsewhere **21:18** [a]Spelled *Sippai* in 1 Chronicles 20:4 **21:19** [a]Spelled *Jair* in 1 Chronicles 20:5 **21:21** [a]Spelled *Shammah* in 1 Samuel 16:9 and elsewhere **22:2** [a]Compare Psalm 18

My Savior, You save me from violence.
4 I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy*
to be praised;
So shall I be saved from my enemies.

5 "When the waves of death
surrounded me,
The floods of ungodliness made me
afraid.
6 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;
The snares of death confronted me.
7 In my distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried out to my God;
He heard my voice from His temple,
And my cry *entered* His ears.

8 "Then the earth shook and trembled;
The foundations of heaven[a] quaked
and were shaken,
Because He was angry.
9 Smoke went up from His nostrils,
And devouring fire from His mouth;
Coals were kindled by it.
10 He bowed the heavens also, and
came down
With darkness under His feet.
11 He rode upon a cherub, and flew;
And He was seen[a] upon the wings
of the wind.
12 He made darkness canopies
around Him,
Dark waters *and* thick clouds of
the skies.
13 From the brightness before Him
Coals of fire were kindled.

14 "The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered His voice.
15 He sent out arrows and scattered
them;
Lightning bolts, and He vanquished
them.
16 Then the channels of the sea were seen,
The foundations of the world were
uncovered,
At the rebuke of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of His
nostrils.

17 "He sent from above, He took me,
He drew me out of many waters.
18 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From those who hated me;
For they were too strong for me.
19 They confronted me in the day of my
calamity,
But the LORD was my support.
20 He also brought me out into a broad
place;
He delivered me because He delighted
in me.

21 "The LORD rewarded me according to my
righteousness;
According to the cleanness of my hands
He has recompensed me.
22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from
my God.
23 For all His judgments *were* before me;
And *as for* His statutes, I did not
depart from them.
24 I was also blameless before Him,
And I kept myself from my iniquity.
25 Therefore the LORD has recompensed
me according to my righteousness,
According to my cleanness in His eyes.[a]

26 "With the merciful You will show
Yourself merciful;
With a blameless man You will show
Yourself blameless;
27 With the pure You will show
Yourself pure;
And with the devious You will show
Yourself shrewd.
28 You will save the humble people;
But Your eyes *are* on the haughty, *that*
You may bring *them* down.

29 "For You *are* my lamp, O LORD;
The LORD shall enlighten my darkness.
30 For by You I can run against a troop;
By my God I can leap over a wall.
31 *As for* God, His way *is* perfect;
The word of the LORD *is* proven;
He *is* a shield to all who trust in Him.

32 "For who *is* God, except the LORD?
And who *is* a rock, except our God?
33 God *is* my strength *and* power,[a]
And He makes my[b] way perfect.

22:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Targum; Syriac and Vulgate read *hills* (compare Psalm 18:7). **22:11** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Septuagint; many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Vulgate read *He flew* (compare Psalm 18:10); Targum reads *He spoke with power*. **22:25** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *the cleanness of my hands in His sight* (compare Psalm 18:24); Targum reads *my cleanness before His word*. **22:33** [a]Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *It is God who arms me with strength* (compare Psalm 18:32); Targum reads *It is God who sustains me with strength*. [b]Following Qere, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate (compare Psalm 18:32); Kethib reads *His*.

34 He makes my[a] feet like the *feet* of deer,
And sets me on my high places.
35 He teaches my hands to make war,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

36 "You have also given me the shield of Your salvation;
Your gentleness has made me great.
37 You enlarged my path under me;
So my feet did not slip.

38 "I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them;
Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed.
39 And I have destroyed them and wounded them,
So that they could not rise;
They have fallen under my feet.
40 For You have armed me with strength for the battle;
You have subdued under me those who rose against me.
41 You have also given me the necks of my enemies,
So that I destroyed those who hated me.
42 They looked, but *there was* none to save;
Even to the LORD, but He did not answer them.
43 Then I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth;
I trod them like dirt in the streets,
And I spread them out.

44 "You have also delivered me from the strivings of my people;
You have kept me as the head of the nations.
A people I have not known shall serve me.
45 The foreigners submit to me;
As soon as they hear, they obey me.
46 The foreigners fade away,
And come frightened[a] from their hideouts.

47 "The LORD lives!
Blessed *be* my Rock!
Let God be exalted,
The Rock of my salvation!
48 *It is* God who avenges me,
And subdues the peoples under me;
49 He delivers me from my enemies.
You also lift me up above those who rise against me;
You have delivered me from the violent man.
50 Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles,
And sing praises to Your name.

51 "*He is* the tower of salvation to His king,
And shows mercy to His anointed,
To David and his descendants forevermore."

Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name.
2 SAMUEL 22:50

David's Last Words

23 Now these *are* the last words of David.

Thus says David the son of Jesse;
Thus says the man raised up on high,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel:

2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me,
And His word *was* on my tongue.
3 The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spoke to me:
'He who rules over men *must be* just,
Ruling in the fear of God.
4 And *he shall be* like the light of the morning *when* the sun rises,
A morning without clouds,
Like the tender grass *springing* out of the earth,
By clear shining after rain.'

5 "Although my house *is* not so with God,
Yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all *things* and secure.
For *this is* all my salvation and all *my* desire;
Will He not make *it* increase?
6 But *the sons* of rebellion *shall* all *be* as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken with hands.

22:34 [a]Following Qere, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate (compare Psalm 18:33); Kethib reads *His.* **22:46** [a]Following Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate (compare Psalm 18:45); Masoretic Text reads *gird themselves.*

7 But the man *who* touches them
Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear,
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place."

David's Mighty Men

8 These *are* the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth[a] the Tachmonite, chief among the captains.[b] He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time. 9 And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo,[a] the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines *who* were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. 10 He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder. 11 And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. So the people fled from the Philistines. 12 But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.

13 Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 14 David *was* then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then *in* Bethlehem. 15 And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate!" 16 So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that *was* by the gate, and took it and brought *it* to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. 17 And he said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this! Is *this not* the blood of the men who went in *jeopardy of* their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it.

These things were done by the three mighty men.

18 Now Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of *another* three.[a] He lifted his spear against three hundred *men,* killed *them,* and won a name among *these* three. 19 Was he not the most honored of three? Therefore he became their captain. However, he did not attain to the *first* three.

20 Benaiah *was* the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. 21 And he killed an Egyptian, a spectacular man. The Egyptian *had* a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. 22 These *things* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. 23 He was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the *first* three. And David appointed him over his guard.

24 Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite, 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, 27 Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, 29 Heleb the son of Baanah (the Netophathite), Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, 30 Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai from the brooks of Gaash, 31 Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite (of the sons of Jashen), Jonathan, 33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, 34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, 35 Hezrai[a] the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, 36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite (armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah), 38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, 39 *and* Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.

David's Census of Israel and Judah

24 Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

2 So the king said to Joab the commander of the army who *was* with him, "Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan

23:8 [a]Literally *One Who Sits in the Seat* (compare 1 Chronicles 11:11) [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *the three*. **23:9** [a]Spelled *Dodai* in 1 Chronicles 27:4 **23:18** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *thirty;* Targum reads *the mighty men.* **23:35** [a]Spelled *Hezro* in 1 Chronicles 11:37

to Beersheba, and count the people, that I may know the number of the people."

3And Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times more than there are, and may the eyes of my lord the king see *it*. But why does my lord the king desire this thing?" 4Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. Therefore Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel.

5And they crossed over the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the town which *is* in the midst of the ravine of Gad, and toward Jazer. 6Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi; they came to Dan Jaan and around to Sidon; 7and they came to the stronghold of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went out to South Judah *as far as* Beersheba. 8So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. 9Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

The Judgment on David's Sin

10And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

11Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, 12"Go and tell David, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three *things;* choose one of them for yourself, that I may do *it* to you." '" 13So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, "Shall seven[a] years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

14And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies *are* great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

15So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died. 16And when the angel[a] stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah[b] the Jebusite.

17Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house."

The Altar on the Threshing Floor

18And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 19So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. 20Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground.

21Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people."

22Now Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever *seems* good to him. Look, *here are* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. 23All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king."

And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

24Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 25And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

24:13 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *three* (compare 1 Chronicles 21:12). **24:16** [a]Or *Angel* [b]Spelled *Ornan* in 1 Chronicles 21:15

THE POWER OF *Music* TO HEAL

Ever since David was summoned to play his harp to soothe the agitated spirit of Saul, human beings have used music to heal the mind, body, and emotions. Through the centuries music has emboldened the fainthearted, brought peace to the fearful, and delivered healing to the brokenhearted.

A constant theme of the letters we have received over forty years of ministry has been the healing power of music. You have told us your stories of how the right song at the right time has derailed plans of suicide, brought rest to bodies and minds ravaged by cancer and chemotherapy, administered grace and forgiveness to the troubled heart, and given clear direction at junctures in the road of life.

Not only personal experience, but also medical research is confirming more and more that music can retune our bodies and minds to restore wholeness. No wonder the psalmist said:

Sing to the LORD a new song!
Come before His presence with singing.
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all
His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases.

PSALMS 96:1; 100:2; 103:2, 3



THE FIRST BOOK OF THE

Kings



Adonijah Presumes to Be King

1 Now King David was old, advanced in
years; and they put covers on him, but he
could not get warm. 2Therefore his servants
said to him, "Let a young woman, a virgin,
be sought for our lord the king, and let her
stand before the king, and let her care for
him; and let her lie in your bosom, that our
lord the king may be warm." 3So they sought
for a lovely young woman throughout all
the territory of Israel, and found Abishag
the Shunammite, and brought her to the
king. 4The young woman *was* very lovely;
and she cared for the king, and served him;
but the king did not know her.

5Then Adonijah the son of Haggith
exalted himself, saying, "I will be king";
and he prepared for himself chariots and
horsemen, and fifty men to run before
him. 6(And his father had not rebuked
him at any time by saying, "Why have you
done so?" He *was* also very good-looking.
His mother had borne him after Absalom.)
7Then he conferred with Joab the son of
Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest,
and they followed and helped Adonijah.
8But Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of
Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei,
and the mighty men who *belonged* to David
were not with Adonijah.

9And Adonijah sacrificed sheep and
oxen and fattened cattle by the stone of
Zoheleth, which *is* by En Rogel; he also
invited all his brothers, the king's sons,
and all the men of Judah, the king's ser-
vants. 10But he did not invite Nathan the
prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, or
Solomon his brother.

11So Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the
mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not
heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has
become king, and David our lord does not
know *it?* 12Come, please, let me now give
you advice, that you may save your own
life and the life of your son Solomon. 13Go
immediately to King David and say to him,
'Did you not, my lord, O king, swear to your
maidservant, saying, "Assuredly your son
Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall
sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah
become king?' 14Then, while you are still
talking there with the king, I also will come
in after you and confirm your words."

15So Bathsheba went into the chamber
to the king. (Now the king was very old,
and Abishag the Shunammite was serving
the king.) 16And Bathsheba bowed and did
homage to the king. Then the king said,
"What is your wish?"

17Then she said to him, "My lord, you
swore by the LORD your God to your maid-
servant, *saying,* 'Assuredly Solomon your
son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on
my throne.' 18So now, look! Adonijah has
become king; and now, my lord the king,
you do not know about *it.* 19He has sacri-
ficed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in
abundance, and has invited all the sons of
the king, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the
commander of the army; but Solomon your
servant he has not invited. 20And as for you,
my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel *are* on
you, that you should tell them who will sit
on the throne of my lord the king after him.
21Otherwise it will happen, when my lord
the king rests with his fathers, that I and my
son Solomon will be counted as offenders."

22And just then, while she was still talk-
ing with the king, Nathan the prophet also
came in. 23So they told the king, saying,
"Here is Nathan the prophet." And when
he came in before the king, he bowed down
before the king with his face to the ground.
24And Nathan said, "My lord, O king, have
you said, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and
he shall sit on my throne'? 25For he has gone

down today, and has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons, and the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest; and look! They are eating and drinking before him; and they say, '*Long* live King Adonijah!' [26]But he has not invited me—me your servant—nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon. [27]Has this thing been done by my lord the king, and you have not told your servant who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

David Proclaims Solomon King

[28]Then King David answered and said, "Call Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king. [29]And the king took an oath and said, "*As* the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from every distress, [30]just as I swore to you by the LORD God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' so I certainly will do this day."

[31]Then Bathsheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and paid homage to the king, and said, "Let my lord King David live forever!"

[32]And King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." So they came before the king. [33]The king also said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. [34]There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, '*Long* live King Solomon!' [35]Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah."

[36]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said, "Amen! May the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*. [37]As the LORD has been with my lord the king, even so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David."

[38]So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and took him to Gihon. [39]Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn, and all the people said, "*Long* live King Solomon!" [40]And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth *seemed to* split with their sound.

And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth seemed to split with their sound.

1 KINGS 1:40

[41]Now Adonijah and all the guests who *were* with him heard *it* as they finished eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the horn, he said, "Why *is* the city in such a noisy uproar?" [42]While he was still speaking, there came Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest. And Adonijah said to him, "Come in, for you *are* a prominent man, and bring good news."

[43]Then Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, "No! Our lord King David has made Solomon king. [44]The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites; and they have made him ride on the king's mule. [45]So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon; and they have gone up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This *is* the noise that you have heard. [46]Also Solomon sits on the throne of the kingdom. [47]And moreover the king's servants have gone to bless our lord King David, saying, 'May God make the name of Solomon better than your name, and may He make his throne greater than your throne.' Then the king bowed himself on the bed. [48]Also the king said thus, 'Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who has given *one* to sit on my throne this day, while my eyes see *it!*'"

[49]So all the guests who were with Adonijah were afraid, and arose, and each one went his way.

[50]Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon;

so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. 51And it was told Solomon, saying, "Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'"

52Then Solomon said, "If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die." 53So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. And he came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

David's Instructions to Solomon

2 Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: 2"I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. 3And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; 4that the LORD may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

5"Moreover you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. And he shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put the blood of war on his belt that *was* around his waist, and on his sandals that *were* on his feet. 6Therefore do according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace.

7"But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for so they came to me when I fled from Absalom your brother.

8"And see, *you have* with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Bahurim, who cursed me with a malicious curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' 9Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you *are* a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood."

Death of David

10So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. 11The period that David reigned over Israel *was* forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 12Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.

Solomon Executes Adonijah

13Now Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. So she said, "Do you come peaceably?"

And he said, "Peaceably." 14Moreover he said, "I have something *to say* to you."

And she said, "Say it."

15Then he said, "You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother's; for it was his from the LORD. 16Now I ask one petition of you; do not deny me."

And she said to him, "Say it."

17Then he said, "Please speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abishag the Shunammite as wife."

18So Bathsheba said, "Very well, I will speak for you to the king."

19Bathsheba therefore went to King Solomon, to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her and bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne and had a throne set for the king's mother; so she sat at his right hand. 20Then she said, "I desire one small petition of you; do not refuse me."

And the king said to her, "Ask it, my mother, for I will not refuse you."

21So she said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as wife."

22And King Solomon answered and

said to his mother, "Now why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also—for he *is* my older brother—for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah." 23Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, "May God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life! 24Now therefore, *as* the LORD lives, who has confirmed me and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has established a house[a] for me, as He promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today!"

25So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and he died.

Abiathar Exiled, Joab Executed

26And to Abiathar the priest the king said, "Go to Anathoth, to your own fields, for you *are* deserving of death; but I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the Lord GOD before my father David, and because you were afflicted every time my father was afflicted." 27So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, that he might fulfill the word of the LORD which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh.

28Then news came to Joab, for Joab had defected to Adonijah, though he had not defected to Absalom. So Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and took hold of the horns of the altar. 29And King Solomon was told, "Joab has fled to the tabernacle of the LORD; there *he is,* by the altar." Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, "Go, strike him down." 30So Benaiah went to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said to him, "Thus says the king, 'Come out!'"

And he said, "No, but I will die here." And Benaiah brought back word to the king, saying, "Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me."

31Then the king said to him, "Do as he has said, and strike him down and bury him, that you may take away from me and from the house of my father the innocent blood which Joab shed. 32So the LORD will return his blood on his head, because he struck down two men more righteous and better than he, and killed them with the sword—Abner the son of Ner, the commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, the commander of the army of Judah—though my father David did not know *it*. 33Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab and upon the head of his descendants forever. But upon David and his descendants, upon his house and his throne, there shall be peace forever from the LORD."

34So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and struck and killed him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. 35The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar.

Shimei Executed

36Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there anywhere. 37For it shall be, on the day you go out and cross the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die; your blood shall be on your own head."

38And Shimei said to the king, "The saying *is* good. As my lord the king has said, so your servant will do." So Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

39Now it happened at the end of three years, that two slaves of Shimei ran away to Achish the son of Maachah, king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, "Look, your slaves *are* in Gath!" 40So Shimei arose, saddled his donkey, and went to Achish at Gath to seek his slaves. And Shimei went and brought his slaves from Gath. 41And Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had come back. 42Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD, and warn you, saying, 'Know for certain that on the day you go out and travel anywhere, you shall surely die'? And you said to me, 'The word I have heard *is* good.' 43Why then have you not kept the oath of the LORD and the commandment that I gave you?" 44The king said moreover to Shimei, "You know, as your heart acknowledges, all the wickedness that you did to my father David; therefore the LORD

2:24 [a]That is, a royal dynasty

will return your wickedness on your own head. 45But King Solomon *shall be* blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD forever."

46So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died. Thus the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

Solomon Requests Wisdom

3 Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall all around Jerusalem. 2Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days. 3And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.

4Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that *was* the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

6And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. 7Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I *am* a little child; I do not know *how* to go out or come in. 8And Your servant *is* in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. 9Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

10The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, 12behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. 13And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. 14So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

15Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

Solomon's Wise Judgment

16Now two women *who were* harlots came to the king, and stood before him. 17And one woman said, "O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she *was* in the house. 18Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. And we *were* together; no one *was* with us in the house, except the two of us in the house. 19And this woman's son died in the night, because she



lay on him. [20]So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. [21]And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne."

[22]Then the other woman said, "No! But the living one *is* my son, and the dead one *is* your son."

And the first woman said, "No! But the dead one *is* your son, and the living one *is* my son."

Thus they spoke before the king.

[23]And the king said, "The one says, 'This *is* my son, who lives, and your son *is* the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! But your son *is* the dead one, and my son *is* the living one.'" [24]Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. [25]And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other."

[26]Then the woman whose son *was* living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!"

But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, *but* divide *him.*"

[27]So the king answered and said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she *is* his mother."

[28]And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him to administer justice.

Solomon's Administration

4 So King Solomon was king over all Israel. [2]And these *were* his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest; [3]Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder; [4]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, over the army; Zadok and Abiathar, the priests; [5]Azariah the son of Nathan, over the officers; Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest *and* the king's friend; [6]Ahishar, over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda, over the labor force.

[7]And Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month of the year. [8]These *are* their names: Ben-Hur,[a] in the mountains of Ephraim; [9]Ben-Deker,[a] in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Beth Hanan; [10]Ben-Hesed,[a] in Arubboth; to him *belonged* Sochoh and all the land of Hepher; [11]Ben-Abinadab,[a] *in* all the regions of Dor; he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as wife; [12]Baana the son of Ahilud, *in* Taanach, Megiddo, and all Beth Shean, which *is* beside Zaretan below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah, as far as the other side of Jokneam; [13]Ben-Geber,[a] in Ramoth Gilead; to him *belonged* the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, in Gilead; to him *also belonged* the region of Argob in Bashan—sixty large cities with walls and bronze gate-bars; [14]Ahinadab the son of Iddo, *in* Mahanaim; [15]Ahimaaz, in Naphtali; he also took Basemath the daughter of Solomon as wife; [16]Baanah the son of Hushai, in Asher and Aloth; [17]Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar; [18]Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin; [19]Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, *in* the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan. *He was* the only governor who *was* in the land.

Prosperity and Wisdom of Solomon's Reign

[20]Judah and Israel *were* as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. [21]So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River[a] *to* the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. *They* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

[22]Now Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour, sixty kors of meal, [23]ten fatted oxen, twenty oxen from the pastures, and one hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl.

[24]For he had dominion over all *the region* on this side of the River[a] from Tiphsah even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him. [25]And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

4:8 [a]Literally *Son of Hur* **4:9** [a]Literally *Son of Deker* **4:10** [a]Literally *Son of Hesed* **4:11** [a]Literally *Son of Abinadab* **4:13** [a]Literally *Son of Geber* **4:21** [a]That is, the Euphrates **4:24** [a]That is, the Euphrates

26 Solomon had forty[a] thousand stalls of
horses for his chariots, and twelve thou-
sand horsemen. 27 And these governors,
each man in his month, provided food for
King Solomon and for all who came to King
Solomon's table. There was no lack in their
supply. 28 They also brought barley and
straw to the proper place, for the horses and
steeds, each man according to his charge.

29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and
exceedingly great understanding, and large-
ness of heart like the sand on the seashore.
30 Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wis-
dom of all the men of the East and all the
wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all
men—than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman,
Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and
his fame was in all the surrounding nations.
32 He spoke three thousand proverbs, and
his songs were one thousand and five. 33 Also
he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of
Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs
out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of
birds, of creeping things, and of fish. 34 And
men of all nations, from all the kings of the
earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to
hear the wisdom of Solomon.

He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five.
1 KINGS 4:32

Solomon Prepares to Build the Temple

5 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his ser-
vants to Solomon, because he heard that
they had anointed him king in place of his
father, for Hiram had always loved David.
2 Then Solomon sent to Hiram, saying:

3 You know how my father David could
not build a house for the name of
the LORD his God because of the wars
which were fought against him on
every side, until the LORD put *his foes*[a]
under the soles of his feet.
4 But now the LORD my God has given
me rest on every side; *there is* neither
adversary nor evil occurrence.
5 And behold, I propose to build a house
for the name of the LORD my God, as
the LORD spoke to my father David, say-
ing, "Your son, whom I will set on your
throne in your place, he shall build the
house for My name."
6 Now therefore, command that they cut
down cedars for me from Lebanon; and
my servants will be with your servants,
and I will pay you wages for your ser-
vants according to whatever you say. For
you know *there is* none among us who
has skill to cut timber like the Sidonians.

7 So it was, when Hiram heard the words
of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly and
said,

Blessed *be* the LORD this day, for He has
given David a wise son over this great
people!

8 Then Hiram sent to Solomon, saying:

I have considered *the message* which
you sent me, *and* I will do all you desire
concerning the cedar and cypress logs.
9 My servants shall bring *them* down from
Lebanon to the sea; I will float them in
rafts by sea to the place you indicate
to me, and will have them broken apart
there; then you can take *them* away.
And you shall fulfill my desire by giving
food for my household.

10 Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar and
cypress logs *according to* all his desire. 11 And
Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand kors
of wheat *as* food for his household, and
twenty[a] kors of pressed oil. Thus Solomon
gave to Hiram year by year.

12 So the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as
He had promised him; and there was peace
between Hiram and Solomon, and the two
of them made a treaty together.

13 Then King Solomon raised up a labor
force out of all Israel; and the labor force
was thirty thousand men. 14 And he sent
them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month
in shifts: they were one month in Lebanon
and two months at home; Adoniram *was* in
charge of the labor force. 15 Solomon had
seventy thousand who carried burdens, and
eighty thousand who quarried *stone* in the
mountains, 16 besides three thousand three

4:26 [a]Following Masoretic Text and most other authorities; some manuscripts of the Septuagint read *four* (compare 2 Chronicles 9:25). **5:3** [a]Literally *them* **5:11** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *twenty thousand*.

hundred[a] from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies, who supervised the people who labored in the work. 17And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, *and* hewn stones, to lay the foundation of the temple.[a] 18So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites quarried *them;* and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple.

Solomon Builds the Temple

6 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth[a] year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which *is* the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. 2Now the house which King Solomon built for the LORD, its length *was* sixty cubits, its width twenty, and its height thirty cubits. 3The vestibule in front of the sanctuary[a] of the house *was* twenty cubits long across the width of the house, *and* the width of *the vestibule*[b] *extended* ten cubits from the front of the house. 4And he made for the house windows with beveled frames.

5Against the wall of the temple he built chambers all around, *against* the walls of the temple, all around the sanctuary and the inner sanctuary.[a] Thus he made side chambers all around it. 6T he lowest chamber *was* five cubits wide, the middle *was* six cubits wide, and the third *was* seven cubits wide; for he made narrow ledges around the outside of the temple, so that *the support beams* would not be fastened into the walls of the temple. 7And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel *or* any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built. 8The doorway for the middle story[a] *was* on the right side of the temple. They went up by stairs to the middle *story,* and from the middle to the third.

9So he built the temple and finished it, and he paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar. 10And he built side chambers against the entire temple, each five cubits high; they were attached to the temple with cedar beams.

11Then the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying: 12"*Concerning* this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David. 13And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel."

14So Solomon built the temple and finished it. 15And he built the inside walls of the temple with cedar boards; from the floor of the temple to the ceiling he paneled the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the temple with planks of cypress. 16Then he built the twenty-cubit room at the rear of the temple, from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards; he built *it* inside as the inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy *Place.* 17And in front of it the temple sanctuary was forty cubits *long.* 18The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All *was* cedar; there was no stone *to be* seen.

19And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there. 20The inner sanctuary *was* twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar. 21So Solomon overlaid the inside of the temple with pure gold. He stretched gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold. 22The whole temple he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the temple; also he overlaid with gold the entire altar that *was* by the inner sanctuary.

23Inside the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim *of* olive wood, *each* ten cubits high. 24One wing of the cherub *was* five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub five cubits: ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. 25And the other cherub *was* ten cubits; both cherubim *were* of the same size and shape. 26The height of one cherub *was* ten cubits, and so *was* the other cherub. 27Then he set the cherubim inside the inner room;[a] and they stretched out the wings of the cherubim so that the wing of the one touched *one* wall, and the

5:16 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *three thousand six hundred.* **5:17** [a]Literally *house,* and so frequently throughout this book **6:1** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *fortieth.* **6:3** [a]Hebrew *heykal;* here the main room of the temple, elsewhere called the holy place (compare Exodus 26:33 and Ezekiel 41:1) [b]Literally *it* **6:5** [a]Hebrew *debir;* here the inner room of the temple, elsewhere called the Most Holy Place (compare verse 16) **6:8** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *upper story;* Targum reads *ground story.* **6:27** [a]Literally *house*

wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. And their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. [28]Also he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

[29]Then he carved all the walls of the temple all around, both the inner and outer *sanctuaries,* with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. [30]And the floor of the temple he overlaid with gold, both the inner and outer *sanctuaries.*

[31]For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors *of* olive wood; the lintel *and* doorposts *were* one-fifth *of the wall.* [32]The two doors *were of* olive wood; and he carved on them figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid *them* with gold; and he spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. [33]So for the door of the sanctuary he also made doorposts *of* olive wood, one-fourth *of the wall.* [34]And the two doors *were of* cypress wood; two panels *comprised* one folding door, and two panels *comprised* the other folding door. [35]Then he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers *on them,* and overlaid *them* with gold applied evenly on the carved work.

[36]And he built the inner court with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams.

[37]In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of Ziv. [38]And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details and according to all its plans. So he was seven years in building it.

Solomon's Other Buildings

7 But Solomon took thirteen years to build his own house; so he finished all his house.

[2]He also built the House of the Forest of Lebanon; its length *was* one hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits, with four rows of cedar pillars, and cedar beams on the pillars. [3]And *it was* paneled with cedar above the beams that *were* on forty-five pillars, fifteen *to* a row. [4]*There were* windows *with beveled frames in* three rows, and window *was* opposite window *in* three tiers. [5]And all the doorways and doorposts *had* rectangular frames; and window *was* opposite window *in* three tiers.

[6]He also made the Hall of Pillars: its length *was* fifty cubits, and its width thirty cubits; and in front of them *was* a portico with pillars, and a canopy *was* in front of them.

[7]Then he made a hall for the throne, the Hall of Judgment, where he might judge; and *it was* paneled with cedar from floor to ceiling.[a]

[8]And the house where he dwelt *had* another court inside the hall, of like workmanship. Solomon also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken *as wife.*

[9]All these *were of* costly stones cut to size, trimmed with saws, inside and out, from the foundation to the eaves, and also on the outside to the great court. [10]The foundation *was of* costly stones, large stones, some ten cubits and some eight cubits. [11]And above *were* costly stones, hewn to size, and cedar wood. [12]The great court *was* enclosed with three rows of hewn stones and a row of cedar beams. So were the inner court of the house of the LORD and the vestibule of the temple.

Hiram the Craftsman

[13]Now King Solomon sent and brought Huram[a] from Tyre. [14]He *was* the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father *was* a man of Tyre, a bronze worker; he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill in working with all kinds of bronze work. So he came to King Solomon and did all his work.

The Bronze Pillars for the Temple

[15]And he cast two pillars of bronze, each one eighteen cubits high, and a line of twelve cubits measured the circumference of each. [16]Then he made two capitals *of* cast bronze, to set on the tops of the pillars. The height of one capital *was* five cubits, and the height of the other capital *was* five cubits. [17]*He made* a lattice network, with wreaths of chainwork, for the capitals which *were* on top of the pillars: seven chains for one capital and seven for the other capital. [18]So he made the pillars, and two rows of pomegranates above the network all around to

7:7 [a]Literally *floor,* that is, of the upper level **7:13** [a]Hebrew *Hiram* (compare 2 Chronicles 2:13, 14)

The Woods Say Yes

GLORIA GAITHER

The woods are full of sound,
And every sound a yes,
Affirming what I am,
Affirming that I am.
Let men invent their
"no" machinery,
Grinding up incentive,
Blowing up the skies;
But nature's had her say,
And she says yes.

Let earth's bald cranium
Shake its defiant head
Until it rattles all our teeth—
The woods have heard their answer
From the Top—
The answer's yes.
We are. And evermore
Shall be.

cover the capitals that *were* on top; and thus he did for the other capital.

[19]The capitals which *were* on top of the pillars in the hall *were* in the shape of lilies, four cubits. [20]The capitals on the two pillars also *had pomegranates* above, by the convex surface which *was* next to the network; and there *were* two hundred such pomegranates in rows on each of the capitals all around.

[21]Then he set up the pillars by the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the right and called its name Jachin, and he set up the pillar on the left and called its name Boaz. [22]The tops of the pillars were in the shape of lilies. So the work of the pillars was finished.

The Sea and the Oxen

[23]And he made the Sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other; *it was* completely round. Its height *was* five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference.

[24]Below its brim *were* ornamental buds encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The ornamental buds *were* cast in two rows when it was cast. [25]It stood on twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea *was set* upon them, and all their back parts *pointed* inward. [26]It *was* a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It contained two thousand[a] baths.

The Carts and the Lavers

[27]He also made ten carts of bronze; four cubits *was* the length of each cart, four cubits its width, and three cubits its height. [28]And this *was* the design of the carts: They had panels, and the panels *were* between frames; [29]on the panels that *were* between the frames *were* lions, oxen, and cherubim. And on the frames *was* a pedestal on top. Below the lions and oxen *were* wreaths of plaited work. [30]Every cart had four bronze wheels and axles of bronze, and its four feet had supports. Under the laver *were* supports of cast *bronze* beside each wreath. [31]Its opening inside the crown at the top *was* one cubit in diameter; and the opening *was* round, shaped *like* a pedestal, one and a half cubits in outside diameter; and also on the opening *were* engravings, but the panels were square, not round. [32]Under the panels *were* the four wheels, and the axles of the wheels *were joined* to the cart. The height of a wheel *was* one and a half cubits. [33]The workmanship of the wheels *was* like the workmanship of a chariot wheel; their axle pins, their rims, their spokes, and their hubs *were* all of cast *bronze*. [34]And *there were* four supports at the four corners of each cart; its supports *were* part of the cart itself. [35]On the top of the cart, at the height of half a cubit, *it was* perfectly round. And on the top of the cart, its flanges and its panels *were* of the same casting. [36]On the plates of its flanges and on its panels he engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, wherever there was a clear space on each, with wreaths all around. [37]Thus he made the ten carts. All of them were of the same mold, one measure, *and* one shape.

[38]Then he made ten lavers of bronze; each laver contained forty baths, *and* each laver *was* four cubits. On each of the ten carts *was* a laver. [39]And he put five carts on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house. He set the Sea on the right side of the house, toward the southeast.

Furnishings of the Temple

[40]Huram[a] made the lavers and the shovels and the bowls. So Huram finished doing all the work that he was to do for King Solomon *for* the house of the LORD: [41]the two pillars, the *two* bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on top of the two pillars; the two networks covering the two bowl-shaped capitals which *were* on top of the pillars; [42]four hundred pomegranates for the two networks (two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on top of the pillars); [43]the ten carts, and ten lavers on the carts; [44]one Sea, and twelve oxen under the Sea; [45]the pots, the shovels, and the bowls.

All these articles which Huram[a] made for King Solomon *for* the house of the LORD *were of* burnished bronze. [46]In the plain of Jordan the king had them cast in

7:26 [a]Or *three thousand* (compare 2 Chronicles 4:5) **7:40** [a]Hebrew *Hiram* (compare 2 Chronicles 2:13, 14) **7:45** [a]Hebrew *Hiram* (compare 2 Chronicles 2:13, 14)

clay molds, between Succoth and Zaretan.
47And Solomon did not weigh all the articles, because *there were* so many; the weight of the bronze was not determined.

48Thus Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold on which *was* the showbread; 49the lampstands of pure gold, five on the right *side* and five on the left in front of the inner sanctuary, with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold; 50the basins, the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, *both* for the doors of the inner room (the Most Holy *Place*) *and* for the doors of the main hall of the temple.

51So all the work that King Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and the furnishings. He put them in the treasuries of the house of the LORD.

The Ark Brought into the Temple

8 Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which *is* Zion. 2Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month. 3So all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. 4Then they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that *were* in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 5Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, *were* with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. 6Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy *Place,* under the wings of the cherubim. 7For the cherubim spread *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. 8The poles extended so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy *place,* in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. 9Nothing *was* in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

10And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy *place,* that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

12Then Solomon spoke:

"The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud.
13 I have surely built You an exalted house,
And a place for You to dwell in forever."

Solomon's Speech at Completion of the Work

14Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. 15And he said: "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled *it,* saying, 16'Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel *in which* to build a house, that My name might be there; but I chose David to be over My people Israel.' 17Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple[a] for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 18But the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. 19Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' 20So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 21And there I have made a place for the ark, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."

8:17 [a]Literally *house,* and so in verses 18–20

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar
of the LORD in the presence of all the assem-
bly of Israel, and spread out his hands
toward heaven; 23 and he said: "LORD God of
Israel, *there is* no God in heaven above or
on earth below like You, who keep *Your* cov-
enant and mercy with Your servants who
walk before You with all their hearts. 24 You
have kept what You promised Your servant
David my father; You have both spoken
with Your mouth and fulfilled *it* with Your
hand, as *it is* this day. 25 Therefore, LORD
God of Israel, now keep what You prom-
ised Your servant David my father, saying,
'You shall not fail to have a man sit before
Me on the throne of Israel, only if your
sons take heed to their way, that they walk
before Me as you have walked before Me.'
26 And now I pray, O God of Israel, let Your
word come true, which You have spoken to
Your servant David my father.

Any songs which are uttered in praise of God are called hymns.

ST. ISODORE OF SEVILLE

27 "But will God indeed dwell on the
earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of
heavens cannot contain You. How much
less this temple which I have built! 28 Yet
regard the prayer of Your servant and his
supplication, O LORD my God, and listen
to the cry and the prayer which Your ser-
vant is praying before You today: 29 that
Your eyes may be open toward this temple
night and day, toward the place of which
You said, 'My name shall be there,' that
You may hear the prayer which Your ser-
vant makes toward this place. 30 And may
You hear the supplication of Your servant
and of Your people Israel, when they pray
toward this place. Hear in heaven Your
dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.
31 "When anyone sins against his neigh-
bor, and is forced to take an oath, and
comes *and* takes an oath before Your altar
in this temple, 32 then hear in heaven, and
act, and judge Your servants, condemning
the wicked, bringing his way on his head,
and justifying the righteous by giving him
according to his righteousness.
33 "When Your people Israel are defeated
before an enemy because they have sinned
against You, and when they turn back to
You and confess Your name, and pray and
make supplication to You in this temple,
34 then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin
of Your people Israel, and bring them back
to the land which You gave to their fathers.
35 "When the heavens are shut up and
there is no rain because they have sinned
against You, when they pray toward this
place and confess Your name, and turn
from their sin because You afflict them,
36 then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin
of Your servants, Your people Israel, that
You may teach them the good way in which
they should walk; and send rain on Your
land which You have given to Your people
as an inheritance.
37 "When there is famine in the land,
pestilence *or* blight *or* mildew, locusts *or*
grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges
them in the land of their cities; whatever
plague or whatever sickness *there is;* 38 what-
ever prayer, whatever supplication is made
by anyone, *or* by all Your people Israel,
when each one knows the plague of his own
heart, and spreads out his hands toward
this temple: 39 then hear in heaven Your
dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and
give to everyone according to all his ways,
whose heart You know (for You alone know
the hearts of all the sons of men), 40 that
they may fear You all the days that they live
in the land which You gave to our fathers.
41 "Moreover, concerning a foreigner,
who *is* not of Your people Israel, but has
come from a far country for Your name's
sake 42 (for they will hear of Your great
name and Your strong hand and Your out-
stretched arm), when he comes and prays
toward this temple, 43 hear in heaven Your
dwelling place, and do according to all for
which the foreigner calls to You, that all
peoples of the earth may know Your name
and fear You, as *do* Your people Israel, and
that they may know that this temple which
I have built is called by Your name.
44 "When Your people go out to battle
against their enemy, wherever You send
them, and when they pray to the LORD

toward the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, [45]then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

[46]"When they sin against You (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; [47]*yet* when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness'; [48]and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: [49]then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, [50]and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them [51](for they *are* Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron furnace), [52]that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You. [53]For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth *to be* Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD."

Solomon Blesses the Assembly

[54]And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. [55]Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: [56]"Blessed *be* the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses. [57]May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, [58]that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers. [59]And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, [60]that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God; *there is* no other. [61]Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day."

Solomon Dedicates the Temple

[62]Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. [63]And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. [64]On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that *was* in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that *was* before the LORD *was* too small to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

[65]At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven *more* days—fourteen days. [66]On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the LORD had done for His servant David, and for Israel His people.

God's Second Appearance to Solomon

9 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, [2]that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. [3]And the

LORD said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 4Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, *and* if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 5then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' 6*But* if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments *and* My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, 7then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 8And *as for* this house, *which* is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' 9Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.'"

Solomon and Hiram Exchange Gifts

10Now it happened at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king's house 11(Hiram the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress and gold, as much as he desired), *that* King Solomon then gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. 12Then Hiram went from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, but they did not please him. 13So he said, "What *kind of* cities *are* these which you have given me, my brother?" And he called them the land of Cabul,[a] as they are to this day. 14Then Hiram sent the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold.

Solomon's Additional Achievements

15And this *is* the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised: to build the house of the LORD, his own house, the Millo,[a] the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. 16(Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it *as* a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.) 17And Solomon built Gezer, Lower Beth Horon, 18Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land *of Judah,* 19all the storage cities that Solomon had, cities for his chariots and cities for his cavalry, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

20All the people *who were* left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who *were* not of the children of Israel— 21that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel had not been able to destroy completely—from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day. 22But of the children of Israel Solomon made no forced laborers, because they *were* men of war and his servants: his officers, his captains, commanders of his chariots, and his cavalry.

23Others *were* chiefs of the officials who *were* over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people who did the work.

24But Pharaoh's daughter came up from the City of David to her house which *Solomon*[a] had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

25Now three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built for the LORD, and he burned incense with them *on the altar* that *was* before the LORD. So he finished the temple.

26King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber, which *is* near Elath[a] on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. 27Then Hiram sent his servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea, to work

9:13 [a]Literally *Good for Nothing* **9:15** [a]Literally *The Landfill* **9:24** [a]Literally *he* (compare 2 Chronicles 8:11) **9:26** [a]Hebrew *Eloth* (compare 2 Kings 14:22)

with the servants of Solomon. [28]And they went to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and twenty talents of gold from there, and brought *it* to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba's Praise of Solomon

10 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. [2]She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. [3]So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain *it* to her. [4]And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, [5]the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her. [6]Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. [7]However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. [8]Happy *are* your men and happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you *and* hear your wisdom! [9]Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."

[10]Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great quantity, and precious stones. There never again came such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. [11]Also, the ships of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought great quantities of almug[a] wood and precious stones from Ophir. [12]And the king made steps of the almug wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers. There never again came such almug wood, nor has the like been seen to this day.

[13]Now King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides what Solomon had given her according to the royal generosity. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

Solomon's Great Wealth

[14]The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, [15]besides *that* from the traveling merchants, from the income of traders, from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country.

[16]And King Solomon made two hundred large shields *of* hammered gold; six hundred *shekels* of gold went into each shield. [17]He also *made* three hundred shields *of* hammered gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

[18]Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. [19]The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne *was* round at the back; *there were* armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. [20]Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like *this* had been made for any *other* kingdom.

[21]All King Solomon's drinking vessels *were* gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon *were* pure gold. Not *one was* silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. [22]For the king had merchant ships[a] at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.[b] [23]So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

[24]Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. [25]Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year.

[26]And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed[a] in

10:11 [a]Or *algum* (compare 2 Chronicles 9:10, 11) **10:22** [a]Literally *ships of Tarshish*, deep-sea vessels [b]Or *peacocks* **10:26** [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate (compare 2 Chronicles 9:25); Masoretic Text reads *led*.

the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. 27The king made silver *as common* in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland.

28Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current* price. 29Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and thus, through their agents,[a] they exported *them* to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

Solomon's Heart Turns from the Lord

11 But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites— 2from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. 3And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as *was* the heart of his father David. 5For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as *did* his father David. 7Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. 8And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

9So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, 10and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded. 11Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. 12Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

Adversaries of Solomon

14Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he *was* a descendant of the king in Edom. 15For it happened, when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army had gone up to bury the slain, after he had killed every male in Edom 16(because for six months Joab remained there with all Israel, until he had cut down every male in Edom), 17that Hadad fled to go to Egypt, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him. Hadad *was* still a little child. 18Then they arose from Midian and came to Paran; and they took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house, apportioned food for him, and gave him land. 19And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him as wife the sister of his own wife, that is, the sister of Queen Tahpenes. 20Then the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh.

21So when Hadad heard in Egypt that David rested with his fathers, and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me depart, that I may go to my own country."

22Then Pharaoh said to him, "But what have you lacked with me, that suddenly you seek to go to your own country?"

So he answered, "Nothing, but do let me go anyway."

23And God raised up *another* adversary against him, Rezon the son of Eliadah, who had fled from his lord, Hadadezer king of Zobah. 24So he gathered men to him and became captain over a band *of raiders,* when

10:29 [a]Literally *by their hands*

David killed those *of Zobah*. And they went to Damascus and dwelt there, and reigned in Damascus. [25]He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon (besides the trouble that Hadad *caused*); and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

Jeroboam's Rebellion

[26]Then Solomon's servant, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zereda, whose mother's name *was* Zeruah, a widow, also rebelled against the king.

[27]And this *is* what caused him to rebel against the king: Solomon had built the Millo *and* repaired the damages to the City of David his father. [28]The man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valor; and Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, made him the officer over all the labor force of the house of Joseph.

[29]Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two *were* alone in the field. [30]Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that *was* on him, and tore it *into* twelve pieces. [31]And he said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you [32](but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), [33]because they have[a] forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do *what is* right in My eyes and *keep* My statutes and My judgments, as *did* his father David. [34]However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. [35]But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you—ten tribes. [36]And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there. [37]So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. [38]Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do *what is* right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. [39]And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.'"

[40]Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

Death of Solomon

[41]Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? [42]And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years. [43]Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

11:33 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *he has*.



The Revolt Against Rehoboam

12 And Rehoboam went to Shechem,
for all Israel had gone to Shechem
to make him king. 2So it happened, when
Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *it* (he
was still in Egypt, for he had fled from the
presence of King Solomon and had been
dwelling in Egypt), 3that they sent and called
him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assem-
bly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam,
saying, 4"Your father made our yoke heavy;
now therefore, lighten the burdensome ser-
vice of your father, and his heavy yoke which
he put on us, and we will serve you."

5So he said to them, "Depart *for* three
days, then come back to me." And the peo-
ple departed.

6Then King Rehoboam consulted the
elders who stood before his father Solomon
while he still lived, and he said, "How do
you advise *me* to answer these people?"

7And they spoke to him, saying, "If you
will be a servant to these people today, and
serve them, and answer them, and speak
good words to them, then they will be your
servants forever."

8But he rejected the advice which the
elders had given him, and consulted the
young men who had grown up with him,
who stood before him. 9And he said to
them, "What advice do you give? How
should we answer this people who have
spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke
which your father put on us'?"

10Then the young men who had grown
up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus
you should speak to this people who have
spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made
our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on
us'—thus you shall say to them: 'My little
finger shall be thicker than my father's
waist! 11And now, whereas my father put a
heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke;
my father chastised you with whips, but I
will chastise you with scourges!' "[a]

12So Jeroboam and all the people came
to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had
directed, saying, "Come back to me the third
day." 13Then the king answered the people
roughly, and rejected the advice which the
elders had given him; 14and he spoke to
them according to the advice of the young
men, saying, "My father made your yoke
heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father
chastised you with whips, but I will chastise
you with scourges!"[a] 15So the king did not
listen to the people; for the turn *of events*
was from the LORD, that He might fulfill His
word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah
the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16Now when all Israel saw that the king
did not listen to them, the people answered
the king, saying:

"What share have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of
Jesse.
To your tents, O Israel!
Now, see to your own house, O David!"

So Israel departed to their tents. 17But
Rehoboam reigned over the children of
Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.

18Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram,
who *was* in charge of the revenue; but all
Israel stoned him with stones, and he died.
Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his
chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. 19So
Israel has been in rebellion against the
house of David to this day.

20Now it came to pass when all Israel
heard that Jeroboam had come back, they
sent for him and called him to the congre-
gation, and made him king over all Israel.
There was none who followed the house of
David, but the tribe of Judah only.

21And when Rehoboam came to Jeru-
salem, he assembled all the house of Judah
with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred
and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were
warriors, to fight against the house of
Israel, that he might restore the kingdom
to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. 22But
the word of God came to Shemaiah the
man of God, saying, 23"Speak to Rehoboam
the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all
the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to
the rest of the people, saying, 24'Thus says
the LORD: "You shall not go up nor fight
against your brethren the children of
Israel. Let every man return to his house,
for this thing is from Me." ' " Therefore they
obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned
back, according to the word of the LORD.

12:11 [a]Literally *scorpions* **12:14** [a]Literally *scorpions*

Jeroboam's Gold Calves

25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the
mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there.
Also he went out from there and built
Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart,
"Now the kingdom may return to the
house of David: 27 If these people go up to
offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at
Jerusalem, then the heart of this people
will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam
king of Judah, and they will kill me and go
back to Rehoboam king of Judah."
28 Therefore the king asked advice,
made two calves of gold, and said to the
people, "It is too much for you to go up
to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel,
which brought you up from the land of
Egypt!" 29 And he set up one in Bethel,
and the other he put in Dan. 30 Now this
thing became a sin, for the people went *to*
worship before the one as far as Dan. 31 He
made shrines[a] on the high places, and
made priests from every class of people,
who were not of the sons of Levi.
32 Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fif-
teenth day of the eighth month, like the
feast that *was* in Judah, and offered sac-
rifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel,
sacrificing to the calves that he had made.
And at Bethel he installed the priests of the
high places which he had made. 33 So he
made offerings on the altar which he had
made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the
eighth month, in the month which he had
devised in his own heart. And he ordained
a feast for the children of Israel, and offered
sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

The Message of the Man of God

13 And behold, a man of God went from
Judah to Bethel by the word of the
LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to
burn incense. 2 Then he cried out against
the altar by the word of the LORD, and said,
"O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold,
a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to
the house of David; and on you he shall
sacrifice the priests of the high places who
burn incense on you, and men's bones
shall be burned on you.'" 3 And he gave a
sign the same day, saying, "This *is* the sign
which the LORD has spoken: Surely the
altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it
shall be poured out."
4 So it came to pass when King Jeroboam
heard the saying of the man of God, who
cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he
stretched out his hand from the altar, say-
ing, "Arrest him!" Then his hand, which he
stretched out toward him, withered, so that
he could not pull it back to himself. 5 The
altar also was split apart, and the ashes
poured out from the altar, according to the
sign which the man of God had given by the
word of the LORD. 6 Then the king answered
and said to the man of God, "Please entreat
the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for
me, that my hand may be restored to me."
So the man of God entreated the LORD,
and the king's hand was restored to him, and
became as before. 7 Then the king said to
the man of God, "Come home with me and
refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."
8 But the man of God said to the king,
"If you were to give me half your house, I
would not go in with you; nor would I eat
bread nor drink water in this place. 9 For so
it was commanded me by the word of the
LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor
drink water, nor return by the same way you
came.'" 10 So he went another way and did
not return by the way he came to Bethel.

Death of the Man of God

11 Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel,
and his sons came and told him all the works
that the man of God had done that day in
Bethel; they also told their father the words
which he had spoken to the king. 12 And
their father said to them, "Which way did
he go?" For his sons had seen[a] which way
the man of God went who came from Judah.
13 Then he said to his sons, "Saddle the don-
key for me." So they saddled the donkey for
him; and he rode on it, 14 and went after the
man of God, and found him sitting under
an oak. Then he said to him, "*Are* you the
man of God who came from Judah?"
And he said, "I *am*."
15 Then he said to him, "Come home
with me and eat bread."
16 And he said, "I cannot return with you
nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread

12:31 [a]Literally *a house* **13:12** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *showed him.*

nor drink water with you in this place. [17]For I have been told by the word of the LORD, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.'"

[18]He said to him, "I too *am* a prophet as you *are,* and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (He was lying to him.)

[19]So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.

[20]Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; [21]and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you, [22]but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which *the Lord* said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water," your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.'"

[23]So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. [24]When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse. [25]And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

[26]Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard *it,* he said, "It *is* the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him." [27]And he spoke to his sons, saying, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled *it.* [28]Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. [29]And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. [30]Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, *saying,* "Alas, my brother!" [31]So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, "When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God *is* buried; lay my bones beside his bones. [32]For the saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the shrines[a] on the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass."

[33]After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places. [34]And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy *it* from the face of the earth.

Judgment on the House of Jeroboam

14 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. [2]And Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet *is* there, who told me that *I would be* king over this people. [3]Also take with you ten loaves, *some* cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child." [4]And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age.

[5]Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he *is* sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend *to be* another *woman.*"

[6]And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend *to be* another *person?* For I *have been* sent to you *with* bad *news.* [7]Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, [8]and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and *yet* you have not been

13:32 [a]Literally *houses*

as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only *what was* right in My eyes; 9but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— 10therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. 11The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!" ' 12Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. 13And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

14"Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now! 15For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River,[a] because they have made their wooden images,[b] provoking the LORD to anger. 16And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin."

17Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, and came to Tirzah. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. 18And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet.

Death of Jeroboam

19Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 20The period that Jeroboam reigned *was* twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place.

Rehoboam Reigns in Judah

21And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess. 22Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. 23For they also built for themselves high places, *sacred* pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. 24And there were also perverted persons[a] in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

25It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. 26And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made. 27Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed *them* to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house. 28And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards carried them, then brought them back into the guardroom.

29Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 30And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all *their* days. 31So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. His mother's name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess. Then Abijam[a] his son reigned in his place.

Abijam Reigns in Judah

15 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. 2He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom.

14:15 [a]That is, the Euphrates [b]Hebrew *Asherim*, Canaanite deities
14:24 [a]Hebrew *qadesh*, that is, one practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals **14:31** [a]Spelled *Abijah* in 2 Chronicles 12:16ff

3And he walked in all the sins of his father,
which he had done before him; his heart
was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was
the heart of his father David. 4Nevertheless
for David's sake the LORD his God gave him
a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son
after him and by establishing Jerusalem;
5because David did *what was* right in the
eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside
from anything that He commanded him
all the days of his life, except in the mat-
ter of Uriah the Hittite. 6And there was war
between Rehoboam[a] and Jeroboam all the
days of his life. 7Now the rest of the acts
of Abijam, and all that he did, *are* they not
written in the book of the chronicles of the
kings of Judah? And there was war between
Abijam and Jeroboam.

8So Abijam rested with his fathers, and
they buried him in the City of David. Then
Asa his son reigned in his place.

Asa Reigns in Judah

9In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king
of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. 10And
he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem.
His grandmother's name *was* Maachah the
granddaughter of Abishalom. 11Asa did *what*
was right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* his
father David. 12And he banished the per-
verted persons[a] from the land, and removed
all the idols that his fathers had made. 13Also
he removed Maachah his grandmother from
being queen mother, because she had made
an obscene image of Asherah.[a] And Asa cut
down her obscene image and burned *it* by
the Brook Kidron. 14But the high places
were not removed. Nevertheless Asa's heart
was loyal to the LORD all his days. 15He also
brought into the house of the LORD the
things which his father had dedicated, and
the things which he himself had dedicated:
silver and gold and utensils.

16Now there was war between Asa and
Baasha king of Israel all their days. 17And
Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah,
and built Ramah, that he might let none go
out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 18Then
Asa took all the silver and gold *that was* left
in the treasuries of the house of the LORD
and the treasuries of the king's house, and
delivered them into the hand of his servants.
And King Asa sent them to Ben-Hadad the
son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king
of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying,
19"*Let there be* a treaty between you and me,
as there was between my father and your
father. See, I have sent you a present of silver
and gold. Come and break your treaty with
Baasha king of Israel, so that he will with-
draw from me."

20So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and
sent the captains of his armies against the
cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel
Beth Maachah, and all Chinneroth, with all
the land of Naphtali. 21Now it happened,
when Baasha heard *it,* that he stopped
building Ramah, and remained in Tirzah.

22Then King Asa made a proclamation
throughout all Judah; none *was* exempted.
And they took away the stones and tim-
ber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for
building; and with them King Asa built
Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

23The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his
might, all that he did, and the cities which
he built, *are* they not written in the book of
the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But
in the time of his old age he was diseased
in his feet. 24So Asa rested with his fathers,
and was buried with his fathers in the City
of David his father. Then Jehoshaphat his
son reigned in his place.

Nadab Reigns in Israel

25Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam
became king over Israel in the second year
of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over
Israel two years. 26And he did evil in the
sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of
his father, and in his sin by which he had
made Israel sin.

27Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the
house of Issachar, conspired against him.
And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which
belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and
all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28Baasha
killed him in the third year of Asa king of
Judah, and reigned in his place. 29And it was
so, when he became king, *that* he killed all
the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to
Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he
had destroyed him, according to the word of

15:6 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *Abijam.* **15:12** [a]Hebrew *qedeshim,* that is, those practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals **15:13** [a]A Canaanite goddess

the LORD which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, 30because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

31Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 32And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

Baasha Reigns in Israel

33In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah, and *reigned* twenty-four years. 34He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin.

16 Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying: 2"Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, 3surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 4The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields."

5Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 6So Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Elah his son reigned in his place.

7And also the word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them.

Elah Reigns in Israel

8In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, *and reigned* two years in Tirzah. 9Now his servant Zimri, commander of half *his* chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of *his* house in Tirzah. 10And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place.

11Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, *that* he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends. 12Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, 13for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, by which they had sinned and by which they had made Israel sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols.

14Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Zimri Reigns in Israel

15In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days. And the people *were* encamped against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines. 16Now the people *who were* encamped heard it said, "Zimri has conspired and also has killed the king." So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. 17Then Omri and all Israel with him went up from Gibbethon, and they besieged Tirzah. 18And it happened, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house down upon himself with fire, and died, 19because of the sins which he had committed in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he had committed to make Israel sin.

20Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and the treason he committed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Omri Reigns in Israel

21Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri. 22But the people who followed Omri prevailed

over the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri reigned. [23]In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, *and reigned* twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah. [24]And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill. [25]Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all who *were* before him. [26]For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols.

[27]Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and the might that he showed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

[28]So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place.

Ahab Reigns in Israel

[29]In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. [30]Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who *were* before him. [31]And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. [32]Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. [33]And Ahab made a wooden image.[a] Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were

16:33 [a]Hebrew *Asherah*, a Canaanite goddess



REBA RAMBO-MCGUIRE • Songwriter, Homecoming Artist, Daughter of Buck and Dottie Rambo, *The Rambos*

Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table. | 1 KINGS 18:19

The day after success can be dangerous.

We've all heard the stories. The gifted high school quarterback is signed by the college of his dreams, only to be killed in a car wreck while celebrating and driving under the influence. The prolific young artist gets the recording contract and buckles under the pressure of sudden fame. At last! Faithful Fred is given the prestigious gold watch and retires, only to discover he is hopelessly bored and feels suddenly old.

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah faces a skeptical audience in a showdown with the 450 prophets of Baal. It's the biblical-proportion pageantry that great theater thrives on: the bad guys cutting themselves, dancing frantically, and calling out to their gods in vain versus the lone Elijah soaking the sacrifice, filling the trenches with water and calling on the name of the one true, living God. Miraculously, the God who answers by fire consumes Elijah's sacrifice with enveloping blazes from His lightning-streaked heaven. The scene climaxes with

before him. [34]In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest *son* Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.[a]

Elijah Proclaims a Drought

17 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "*As* the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."

[2]Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, [3]"Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. [4]And it will be *that* you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."

[5]So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. [6]The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. [7]And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Elijah and the Widow

[8]Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, [9]"Arise, go to Zarephath, which *belongs* to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." [10]So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow *was* there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." [11]And as she was going to get *it,* he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

[12]So she said, "As the LORD your God

16:34 [a]Compare Joshua 6:26

the skeptics confessing the God of Abraham as their God and Elijah slaughtering all 450 false prophets—impressive!

Sadly, the next day in chapter 19, Elijah learns that one woman, Jezebel, is threatening his life, so he flees to the wilderness, crawls under a tree, throws himself a major pity-party and begs God to kill him. He is so exhausted and disillusioned, he actually believes he is the only one left on the planet serving God, or as some would say today, "suffering for Jesus." Bless his heart.

What is so remarkable is the grace-filled process of restoration the Father lovingly administers to His burned-out prophet. God sends angels to feed Elijah with sustaining supernatural bread and water. He cradles the prophet under the shadow of His wings with rejuvenating rest and restores Elijah's ability to hear the still small voice of intimacy.

Isn't it comforting to know whether we are celebrating on the mountain or hiding in midnight caves of depression, we have a Father who loves us and understands all our frailties—both the debilitating shame of defeat and the pompous pride of victory?

Is it just my imagination, or does Jezebel still threaten us with her fearful lies?

Maybe the next time we slay a dragon or two, let's go home, say a prayer of thanksgiving to the true Champion, make a sandwich, and take a nap.

lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I *am* gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

13And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go *and* do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring *it* to me; and afterward make *some* for yourself and your son. 14For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'"

15So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for *many* days. 16The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

Elijah Revives the Widow's Son

17Now it happened after these things *that* the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. 18So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?"

19And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. 20Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" 21And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." 22Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.

23And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

24Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you *are* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in your mouth *is* the truth."

Elijah's Message to Ahab

18 And it came to pass *after* many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth."

2So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and *there was* a severe famine in Samaria. 3And Ahab had called Obadiah, who *was* in charge of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. 4For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) 5And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock." 6So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "*Is* that you, my lord Elijah?"

8And he answered him, "*It is* I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah *is here*.'"

9So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? 10*As* the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, '*He is* not *here*,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. 11And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah *is here*" '! 12And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. 13Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? 14And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah *is here*." ' He will kill me!"

15Then Elijah said, "*As* the LORD of hosts

lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today."

16So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "*Is that* you, O troubler of Israel?"

18And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house *have,* in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. 19Now therefore, send *and* gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah,[a] who eat at Jezebel's table."

Elijah's Mount Carmel Victory

20So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. 22Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. 23Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it;* and I will prepare the other bull, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it.* 24Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God."

So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

25Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare *it* first, for you *are* many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*."

26So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared *it,* and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But *there was* no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

27And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he *is* a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, *or* perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." 28So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. 29And when midday was past, they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

30Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. 31And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name."[a] 32Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 33And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid *it* on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." 34Then he said, "Do *it* a second time," and they did *it* a second time; and he said, "Do *it* a third time," and they did *it* a third time. 35So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

36And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word. 37Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back *to You* again."

38Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench. 39Now when all the people saw *it,* they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!"

40And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

18:19 [a]A Canaanite goddess **18:31** [a]Genesis 32:28

The Drought Ends

41 Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat
and drink; for *there is* the sound of abun-
dance of rain." 42 So Ahab went up to eat
and drink. And Elijah went up to the top
of Carmel; then he bowed down on the
ground, and put his face between his
knees, 43 and said to his servant, "Go up
now, look toward the sea."

So he went up and looked, and said,
"*There is* nothing." And seven times he said,
"Go again."

44 Then it came to pass the seventh *time,*
that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as
a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he
said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare *your char-*
iot, and go down before the rain stops you.'"

45 Now it happened in the meantime
that the sky became black with clouds and
wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab
rode away and went to Jezreel. 46 Then the
hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he
girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab
to the entrance of Jezreel.

Elijah Escapes from Jezebel

19 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah
had done, also how he had executed
all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then
Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying,
"So let the gods do *to me,* and more also, if
I do not make your life as the life of one of
them by tomorrow about this time." 3 And
when he saw *that,* he arose and ran for his
life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs*
to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey
into the wilderness, and came and sat
down under a broom tree. And he prayed
that he might die, and said, "It is enough!
Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better
than my fathers!"

5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom
tree, suddenly an angel[a] touched him, and
said to him, "Arise *and* eat." 6 Then he looked,
and there by his head *was* a cake baked
on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and
drank, and lay down again. 7 And the angel[a]
of the LORD came back the second time,
and touched him, and said, "Arise *and* eat,
because the journey *is* too great for you." 8 So
he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in
the strength of that food forty days and forty
nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

9 And there he went into a cave, and spent
the night in that place; and behold, the
word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said
to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 So he said, "I have been very zealous
for the LORD God of hosts; for the children
of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn
down Your altars, and killed Your prophets
with the sword. I alone am left; and they
seek to take my life."

God's Revelation to Elijah

11 Then He said, "Go out, and stand
on the mountain before the LORD." And
behold, the LORD passed by, and a great
and strong wind tore into the mountains
and broke the rocks in pieces before the
LORD, *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind; and
after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD
was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the
earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in
the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

13 So it was, when Elijah heard *it,* that he
wrapped his face in his mantle and went
out and stood in the entrance of the cave.
Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said,
"What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14 And he said, "I have been very zeal-
ous for the LORD God of hosts; because
the children of Israel have forsaken Your
covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed
Your prophets with the sword. I alone am
left; and they seek to take my life."

15 Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return
on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus;
and when you arrive, anoint Hazael *as* king
over Syria. 16 Also you shall anoint Jehu the
son of Nimshi *as* king over Israel. And Elisha
the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you
shall anoint *as* prophet in your place. 17 It
shall be *that* whoever escapes the sword of
Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes
the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. 18 Yet I
have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all
whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and
every mouth that has not kissed him."

Elisha Follows Elijah

19 So he departed from there, and found
Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing

19:5 [a]Or *Angel* **19:7** [a]Or *Angel*

with twelve yoke *of oxen* before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. [20]And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow you."

And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?"

[21]So *Elisha* turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

Ahab Defeats the Syrians

20 Now Ben-Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings *were* with him, with horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, and made war against it. [2]Then he sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, and said to him, "Thus says Ben-Hadad: [3]'Your silver and your gold *are* mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine.'"

[4]And the king of Israel answered and said, "My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have *are* yours."

[5]Then the messengers came back and said, "Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, 'Indeed I have sent to you, saying, "You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children"; [6]but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, *that* whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put *it* in their hands and take *it*.'"

[7]So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Notice, please, and see how this *man* seeks trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold; and I did not deny him."

[8]And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent."

[9]Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell my lord the king, 'All that you sent for to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.'"

And the messengers departed and brought back word to him.

[10]Then Ben-Hadad sent to him and said, "The gods do so to me, and more also, if enough dust is left of Samaria for a handful for each of the people who follow me."

[11]So the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell *him,* 'Let not the one who puts on *his armor* boast like the one who takes *it off*.'"

[12]And it happened when *Ben-Hadad* heard this message, as he and the kings *were* drinking at the command post, that he said to his servants, "Get ready." And they got ready to attack the city.

[13]Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"

[14]So Ahab said, "By whom?"

And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'By the young leaders of the provinces.'"

Then he said, "Who will set the battle in order?"

And he answered, "You."

[15]Then he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israel—seven thousand.

[16]So they went out at noon. Meanwhile Ben-Hadad and the thirty-two kings helping him were getting drunk at the command post. [17]The young leaders of the provinces went out first. And Ben-Hadad sent out *a patrol,* and they told him, saying, "Men are coming out of Samaria!" [18]So he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; and if they have come out for war, take them alive."

[19]Then these young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them. [20]And each one killed his man; so the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them; and Ben-Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry. [21]Then the king of Israel went out and attacked the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.

[22]And the prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, "Go, strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do, for in the spring of the year the king of Syria will come up against you."

The Syrians Again Defeated

23 Then the servants of the king of Syria
said to him, "Their gods *are* gods of the
hills. Therefore they were stronger than
we; but if we fight against them in the
plain, surely we will be stronger than they.
24 So do this thing: Dismiss the kings, each
from his position, and put captains in their
places; 25 and you shall muster an army
like the army that you have lost, horse for
horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will
fight against them in the plain; surely we
will be stronger than they."

And he listened to their voice and did so.
26 So it was, in the spring of the year, that
Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went
up to Aphek to fight against Israel. 27 And
the children of Israel were mustered and
given provisions, and they went against
them. Now the children of Israel encamped
before them like two little flocks of goats,
while the Syrians filled the countryside.

28 Then a man of God came and spoke to
the king of Israel, and said, "Thus says the
LORD: 'Because the Syrians have said, "The
LORD *is* God of the hills, but He *is* not God
of the valleys," therefore I will deliver all
this great multitude into your hand, and
you shall know that I *am* the LORD.'" 29 And
they encamped opposite each other for
seven days. So it was that on the seventh
day the battle was joined; and the children
of Israel killed one hundred thousand foot
soldiers *of* the Syrians in one day. 30 But the
rest fled to Aphek, into the city; then a wall
fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men
who were left.

And Ben-Hadad fled and went into the
city, into an inner chamber.

Ahab's Treaty with Ben-Hadad

31 Then his servants said to him, "Look
now, we have heard that the kings of the
house of Israel *are* merciful kings. Please,
let us put sackcloth around our waists and
ropes around our heads, and go out to the
king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your
life." 32 So they wore sackcloth around their
waists and *put* ropes around their heads,
and came to the king of Israel and said,
"Your servant Ben-Hadad says, 'Please let
me live.'"

And he said, "*Is* he still alive? He *is* my
brother."

33 Now the men were watching closely
to see whether *any sign of mercy would come*
from him; and they quickly grasped *at this*
word and said, "Your brother Ben-Hadad."

So he said, "Go, bring him." Then Ben-
Hadad came out to him; and he had him
come up into the chariot.

34 So *Ben-Hadad* said to him, "The cit-
ies which my father took from your father
I will restore; and you may set up market-
places for yourself in Damascus, as my
father did in Samaria."

Then *Ahab said,* "I will send you away
with this treaty." So he made a treaty with
him and sent him away.

Ahab Condemned

35 Now a certain man of the sons of the
prophets said to his neighbor by the word
of the LORD, "Strike me, please." And the
man refused to strike him. 36 Then he said
to him, "Because you have not obeyed the
voice of the LORD, surely, as soon as you
depart from me, a lion shall kill you." And
as soon as he left him, a lion found him
and killed him.

37 And he found another man, and said,
"Strike me, please." So the man struck him,
inflicting a wound. 38 Then the prophet
departed and waited for the king by the
road, and disguised himself with a bandage
over his eyes. 39 Now as the king passed by,
he cried out to the king and said, "Your ser-
vant went out into the midst of the battle;
and there, a man came over and brought a
man to me, and said, 'Guard this man; if by
any means he is missing, your life shall be
for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of
silver.' 40 While your servant was busy here
and there, he was gone."

Then the king of Israel said to him, "So
shall your judgment *be;* you yourself have
decided *it*."

41 And he hastened to take the bandage
away from his eyes; and the king of Israel
recognized him as one of the prophets.
42 Then he said to him, "Thus says the LORD:
'Because you have let slip out of *your* hand
a man whom I appointed to utter destruc-
tion, therefore your life shall go for his life,
and your people for his people.'"

43So the king of Israel went to his house
sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria.

Naboth Is Murdered for His Vineyard

21 And it came to pass after these
things *that* Naboth the Jezreelite
had a vineyard which *was* in Jezreel, next
to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2So
Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me
your vineyard, that I may have it for a vege-
table garden, because it *is* near, next to my
house; and for it I will give you a vineyard
better than it. *Or,* if it seems good to you, I
will give you its worth in money."

3But Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD
forbid that I should give the inheritance of
my fathers to you!"

4So Ahab went into his house sul-
len and displeased because of the word
which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to
him; for he had said, "I will not give you
the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay
down on his bed, and turned away his face,
and would eat no food. 5But Jezebel his
wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is
your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?"

6He said to her, "Because I spoke to
Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him,
'Give me your vineyard for money; or else,
if it pleases you, I will give you *another*
vineyard for it.' And he answered, 'I will
not give you my vineyard.'"

7Then Jezebel his wife said to him, "You
now exercise authority over Israel! Arise,
eat food, and let your heart be cheerful;
I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the
Jezreelite."

8And she wrote letters in Ahab's name,
sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the let-
ters to the elders and the nobles who *were*
dwelling in the city with Naboth. 9She
wrote in the letters, saying,

> Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with
> high honor among the people; 10and
> seat two men, scoundrels, before him
> to bear witness against him, saying,
> "You have blasphemed God and the
> king." *Then* take him out, and stone
> him, that he may die.

11So the men of his city, the elders and
nobles who were inhabitants of his city,
did as Jezebel had sent to them, as it *was*
written in the letters which she had sent to
them. 12They proclaimed a fast, and seated
Naboth with high honor among the peo-
ple. 13And two men, scoundrels, came in
and sat before him; and the scoundrels wit-
nessed against him, against Naboth, in the
presence of the people, saying, "Naboth
has blasphemed God and the king!" Then
they took him outside the city and stoned
him with stones, so that he died. 14Then
they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has
been stoned and is dead."

15And it came to pass, when Jezebel
heard that Naboth had been stoned and
was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise,
take possession of the vineyard of Naboth
the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you
for money; for Naboth is not alive, but
dead." 16So it was, when Ahab heard that
Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and
went down to take possession of the vine-
yard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

The LORD Condemns Ahab

17Then the word of the LORD came to
Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18"Arise, go
down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who *lives*
in Samaria. There *he is,* in the vineyard of
Naboth, where he has gone down to take
possession of it. 19You shall speak to him,
saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Have you
murdered and also taken possession?" '
And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus
says the LORD: "In the place where dogs
licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick
your blood, even yours." '"



20So Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?"

And he answered, "I have found *you,* because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD: 21'Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. 22I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and made Israel sin.' 23And concerning Jezebel the LORD also spoke, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall[a] of Jezreel.' 24The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field."

25But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up. 26And he behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all *that* the Amorites had done, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

27So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning.

28And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29"See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house."

Micaiah Warns Ahab

22 Now three years passed without war between Syria and Israel. 2Then it came to pass, in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to *visit* the king of Israel.

3And the king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead *is* ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?" 4So he said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I *am* as you *are,* my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 5Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."

6Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to fight, or shall I refrain?"

So they said, "Go up, for the Lord will deliver *it* into the hand of the king."

7And Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?"[a]

8So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "*There is* still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."

And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!"

9Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imlah quickly!"

10The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on *their* robes, sat each on his throne, at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. 11Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" 12And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the king's hand."

13Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Please, let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement."

14And Micaiah said, "*As* the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak."

15Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?"

And he answered him, "Go and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the hand of the king!"

16So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell

21:23 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Septuagint; some Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *plot of ground* (compare 2 Kings 9:36). **22:7** [a]Or *him*

me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

17Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'"

18And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

19Then *Micaiah* said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. 20And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. 21Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' 22The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade *him*, and also prevail. Go out and do so.' 23Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

24Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?"

25And Micaiah said, "Indeed, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!"

26So the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; 27and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this *fellow* in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I come in peace." '"

28But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

Ahab Dies in Battle

29So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 30And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

31Now the king of Syria had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel." 32So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "Surely it *is* the king of Israel!" Therefore they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out. 33And it happened, when the captains of the chariots saw that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 34Now a *certain* man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded."

35The battle increased that day; and the king was propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians, and died at evening. The blood ran out from the wound onto the floor of the chariot. 36Then, as the sun was going down, a shout went throughout the army, saying, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country!"

37So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria. 38Then *someone* washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood while the harlots bathed,[a] according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken.

39Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, the ivory house which he built and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 40So Ahab rested with his fathers. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

Jehoshaphat Reigns in Judah

41Jehoshaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42Jehoshaphat *was* thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 43And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing *what was* right in

22:38 [a]Syriac and Targum read *they washed his armor.*

the eyes of the LORD. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, *for* the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. 44Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

45Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, the might that he showed, and how he made war, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 46And the rest of the perverted persons,[a] who remained in the days of his father Asa, he banished from the land. 47*There was* then no king in Edom, only a deputy of the king.

48Jehoshaphat made merchant ships[a] to go to Ophir for gold; but they never sailed, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber. 49Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat would not.

50And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.

Ahaziah Reigns in Israel

51Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. 52He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; 53for he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done.

22:46 [a]Hebrew *qadesh,* that is, one practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals **22:48** [a]Or *ships of Tarshish*

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE

Kings



God Judges Ahaziah

1 Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

2 Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury." 3 But the angel[a] of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, 'Is *it* because *there is* no God in Israel *that* you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' 4 Now therefore, thus says the LORD: 'You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" So Elijah departed.

5 And when the messengers returned to him, he said to them, "Why have you come back?"

6 So they said to him, "A man came up to meet us, and said to us, 'Go, return to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Is *it* because *there is* no God in Israel *that* you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" '"

7 Then he said to them, "What kind of man *was it* who came up to meet you and told you these words?"

8 So they answered him, "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist."

And he said, "It *is* Elijah the Tishbite."

9 Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!'"

10 So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I *am* a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. 11 Then he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men.

And he answered and said to him: "Man of God, thus has the king said, 'Come down quickly!'"

12 So Elijah answered and said to them, "If I *am* a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

13 Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: "Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. 14 Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight."

15 And the angel[a] of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king. 16 Then he said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, *is it* because *there is* no God in Israel to inquire of His word? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'"

17 So *Ahaziah* died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. Because he had no son, Jehoram[a] became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

1:3 [a]Or *Angel* **1:15** [a]Or *Angel* **1:17** [a]The son of Ahab king of Israel (compare 3:1)

Elijah Ascends to Heaven

2 And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. [2]Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel."

But Elisha said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel.

[3]Now the sons of the prophets who *were* at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?"

And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"

[4]Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho."

But he said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho.

[5]Now the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?"

So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"

[6]Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan."

But he said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. [7]And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. [8]Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled *it* up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

[9]And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?"

Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

[10]So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless,* if you see me *when I am* taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be *so.*" [11]Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

[12]And Elisha saw *it,* and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. [13]He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. [14]Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.

[15]Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him. [16]Then they said to him, "Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley."

And he said, "You shall not send anyone."

[17]But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, "Send *them!*" Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. [18]And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?"

Elisha Performs Miracles

[19]Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Please notice, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water *is* bad, and the ground barren."

[20]And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought *it* to him. [21]Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'" [22]So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

[23]Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!"

[24]So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them

in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths.

25Then he went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Moab Rebels Against Israel

3 Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. 2And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the *sacred* pillar of Baal that his father had made. 3Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.

4Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-breeder, and he regularly paid the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams. 5But it happened, when Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

6So King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel. 7Then he went and sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?"

And he said, "I will go up; I *am* as you *are*, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 8Then he said, "Which way shall we go up?"

And he answered, "By way of the Wilderness of Edom."

9So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they marched on that roundabout route seven days; and there was no water for the army, nor for the animals that followed them. 10And the king of Israel said, "Alas! For the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab."

11But Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD by him?"

So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, "Elisha the son of Shaphat *is* here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah."

12And Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

13Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother."

But the king of Israel said to him, "No, for the LORD has called these three kings *together* to deliver them into the hand of Moab."

> *"But now bring me a musician." Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.*
>
> 2 KINGS 3:15

14And Elisha said, "*As* the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you, nor see you. 15But now bring me a musician."

Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. 16And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.' 17For thus says the LORD: 'You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink.' 18And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand. 19Also you shall attack every fortified city and every choice city, and shall cut down every good tree, and stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones."

20Now it happened in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water.

21And when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to bear arms and older were gathered; and they stood at the border. 22Then they rose up early in the morning, and the sun was shining on the water; and the Moabites saw the water on the other side *as* red as blood. 23And they said, "This is blood; the kings have surely

Gospel Songs

When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. . . . And she answered, "It is well."

2 KINGS 4:20, 26

"WHATEVER MY lot, Thou has taught me to say, 'It is well, it is well with my soul.'" Easy words to sing, much more difficult to actually mean. *Whatever*? Even if I lose all my money and possessions? Even if I'm diagnosed with a fatal illness? Even if the unthinkable happens and everyone I love is taken from me? Ups and downs in our lives are inevitable, but God promises that He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). He has a plan for our good (Jer. 29:11; Rom. 8:28). We will ultimately be victorious with Him (1 Cor. 15:57).

It is this truth that Horatio Spafford had learned and tested when he wrote "It Is Well with My Soul." A prominent Chicago lawyer, Spafford suffered unthinkable loss in the early 1870s. He and his wife were already mourning the loss of their only son when, in October of 1871, the disastrous Chicago fire wiped out many of their investments. Spafford soon recognized his family needed respite. He steered toward New York with his wife and four daughters to catch the *Ville de Havre* heading to England. Just before setting sail, however, Spafford got word that his Chicago business needed him. He persuaded his family to go on without him, and he would meet them later. On November 2, 1873, the Spafford's ship collided with another ship. Spafford received a paralyzing telegram from his wife: "Saved alone." His four daughters had drowned. Mrs. Spafford survived only by falling unconscious upon a piece of debris from the ship.

This wasn't the end of Spafford's grief. He and his wife had three more children after the shipwreck. Again, their only son died at the age of four. Their church declared their sorrows a punishment from God. This response, however, inspired the Spaffords to start their own ministry, and they eventually brought their group to Jerusalem, establishing the American Colony, where they shared the gospel with the people of Jerusalem and served them, regardless of their religious beliefs.

Only the love of the Lord could inspire such trust, no matter the circumstances (Phil. 4:12, 13). Only the love of the Lord can lift us out of the deep pit of despair and set us in high places (Ps. 18:33). Only the love of the Lord can compel us to keep going, looking to the promised future—an eternity spent with Him (Heb. 12:1, 2).

It Is Well with My Soul

Horatio Spafford, 1873

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:
It is well (it is well),
with my soul (with my soul),
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

Refrain

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

Refrain

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pain shall be mine, for in death as in life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

Refrain

And Lord haste the day, when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

Refrain

struck swords and have killed one another; now therefore, Moab, to the spoil!"

24So when they came to the camp of Israel, Israel rose up and attacked the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they entered *their* land, killing the Moabites. 25Then they destroyed the cities, and each man threw a stone on every good piece of land and filled it; and they stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. But they left the stones of Kir Haraseth *intact.* However the slingers surrounded and attacked it.

26And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. 27Then he took his eldest son who would have reigned in his place, and offered him *as* a burnt offering upon the wall; and there was great indignation against Israel. So they departed from him and returned to *their own* land.

Elisha and the Widow's Oil

4 A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves."

2So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil."

3Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few. 4And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones."

5So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured *it* out. 6Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel."

And he said to her, "*There is* not another vessel." So the oil ceased. 7Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you *and* your sons live on the rest."

Elisha Raises the Shunammite's Son

8Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there *was* a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food. 9And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this *is* a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly. 10Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there."

11And it happened one day that he came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there. 12Then he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite woman." When he had called her, she stood before him. 13And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What *can I* do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?'"

She answered, "I dwell among my own people."

14So he said, "What then *is* to be done for her?"

And Gehazi answered, "Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old."

15So he said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. 16Then he said, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son."

And she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!"

17But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her.

18And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers. 19And he said to his father, "My head, my head!"

So he said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother." 20When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* died. 21And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut *the door* upon him, and went out. 22Then she called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back."

23So he said, "Why are you going to him today? *It is* neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath."

And she said, "*It is* well." 24Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." 25And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, the Shunammite woman! 26Please run now to meet her, and say to her, '*Is it* well with you? *Is it* well with your husband? *Is it* well with the child?'"

And she answered, "*It is* well." 27Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone; for her soul *is* in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden *it* from me, and has not told me."

28So she said, "Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me'?"

29Then he said to Gehazi, "Get yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him; but lay my staff on the face of the child."

30And the mother of the child said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you." So he arose and followed her. 31Now Gehazi went on ahead of them, and laid the staff on the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, "The child has not awakened."

32When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed. 33He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. 34And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm. 35He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. 36And he called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite woman." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Pick up your son." 37So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out.

Elisha Purifies the Pot of Stew

38And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and *there was* a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him; and he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets." 39So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced *them* into the pot of stew, though they did not know *what they were.* 40Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, "Man of God, *there is* death in the pot!" And they could not eat *it.*

41So he said, "Then bring some flour." And he put *it* into the pot, and said, "Serve *it* to the people, that they may eat." And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

Elisha Feeds One Hundred Men

42Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give *it* to the people, that they may eat."

43But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?"

He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have *some* left over.'" 44So he set *it* before them; and they ate and had *some* left over, according to the word of the LORD.

Naaman's Leprosy Healed

5 Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, *but* a leper. 2And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. 3Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master *were* with the prophet who *is* in

Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." 4And *Naaman* went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who *is* from the land of Israel."

5Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand *shekels* of gold, and ten changes of clothing. 6Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said,

> Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy.

7And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "*Am* I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me."

8So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

9Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. 10And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and *you shall* be clean." 11But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out *to me,* and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' 12*Are* not the Abanah[a] and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. 13And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, *if* the prophet had told you *to do* something great, would you not have done *it?* How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" 14So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

15And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant."

16But he said, "*As* the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing." And he urged him to take *it,* but he refused.

17So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. 18Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing."

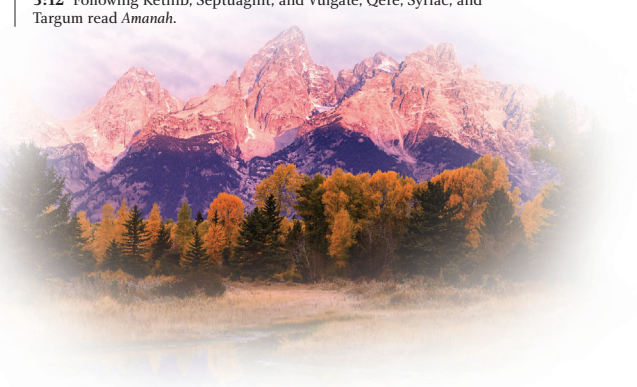
19Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a short distance.

Gehazi's Greed

20But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but *as* the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him." 21So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw *him* running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, "*Is* all well?"

22And he said, "All *is* well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.'"

5:12 [a]Following Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Qere, Syriac, and Targum read *Amanah.*



[23]So Naaman said, "Please, take two talents." And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed *them* to two of his servants; and they carried *them* on ahead of him. [24]When he came to the citadel, he took *them* from their hand, and stored *them* away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. [25]Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where *did you go,* Gehazi?"

And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere."

[26]Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go *with you* when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? *Is it* time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? [27]Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous, *as white* as snow.

The Floating Ax Head

6 And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. [2]Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell."

So he answered, "Go."

[3]Then one said, "Please consent to go with your servants."

And he answered, "I will go." [4]So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. [5]But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron *ax head* fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas, master! For it was borrowed."

[6]So the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw *it* in there; and he made the iron float. [7]Therefore he said, "Pick *it* up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it.

The Blinded Syrians Captured

[8]Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "My camp *will be* in such and such a place." [9]And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there." [10]Then the king of Israel sent *someone* to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice.

[11]Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?"

[12]And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who *is* in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom."

[13]So he said, "Go and see where he *is,* that I may send and get him."

And it was told him, saying, "Surely *he is* in Dothan."

[14]Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. [15]And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

[16]So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who *are* with us *are* more than those who *are* with them." [17]And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. [18]So when *the Syrians* came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

[19]Now Elisha said to them, "This *is* not the way, nor *is* this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." But he led them to Samaria.

[20]So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these *men,* that they may see." And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and there *they were,* inside Samaria!

[21]Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I kill *them?* Shall I kill *them?*"

[22]But he answered, "You shall not kill *them.* Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your

bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." [23]Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian *raiders* came no more into the land of Israel.

Syria Besieges Samaria in Famine

[24]And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. [25]And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was *sold* for eighty *shekels* of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings for five *shekels* of silver.

[26]Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!"

[27]And he said, "If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the wine-press?" [28]Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?"

And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' [29]So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son."

[30]Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath *he had* sackcloth on his body. [31]Then he said, "God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!"

[32]But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And *the king* sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, "Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. *Is* not the sound of his master's feet behind him?" [33]And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger, coming down to him; and then *the king* said, "Surely this calamity *is* from the LORD; why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

7 Then Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD: 'Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour *shall be sold* for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.'"

[2]So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, "Look, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?"

And he said, "In fact, you shall see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

The Syrians Flee

[3]Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die? [4]If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die." [5]And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one *was* there. [6]For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" [7]Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives. [8]And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid *them;* then they came back and entered another tent, and carried *some* from there *also,* and went and hid *it.*

[9]Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day *is* a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household." [10]So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, "We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one *was* there, not a human sound—only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact."

[11]And the gatekeepers called out, and they told *it* to the king's household inside.

[12]So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, "Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *are* hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.'"

[13]And one of his servants answered and said, "Please, let several *men* take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they *may either become* like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; or indeed, *I say,* they *may become* like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed; so let us send them and see." [14]Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see." [15]And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road *was* full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king. [16]Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

[17]Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. [18]So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "Two seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be *sold* tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria."

[19]Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?"

And he had said, "In fact, you shall see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." [20]And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.

The King Restores the Shunammite's Land

8 Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the LORD has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years." [2]So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God, and she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistines seven years.

[3]It came to pass, at the end of seven years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land. [4]Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done." [5]Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son whom Elisha restored to life." [6]And when the king asked the woman, she told him.

So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, "Restore all that *was* hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now."

Death of Ben-Hadad

[7]Then Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, "The man of God has come here." [8]And the king said to Hazael, "Take a present in your hand, and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?'" [9]So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, of every good thing of Damascus, forty camel-loads; and he came and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?'"

[10]And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover.' However the LORD has shown me that he will really die." [11]Then he set his countenance in a stare until he was ashamed; and the man of God wept. [12]And Hazael said, "Why is my lord weeping?"

He answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and

their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child."

13So Hazael said, "But what *is* your servant—a dog, that he should do this gross thing?"

And Elisha answered, "The LORD has shown me that you *will become* king over Syria."

14Then he departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Elisha say to you?" And he answered, "He told me you would surely recover." 15But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* over his face so that he died; and Hazael reigned in his place.

Jehoram Reigns in Judah

16Now in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *having been* king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign as king of Judah. 17He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 18And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 19Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah, for the sake of His servant David, as He promised him to give a lamp to him *and* his sons forever.

20In his days Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. 21So Joram[a] went to Zair, and all his chariots with him. Then he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; and the troops fled to their tents. 22Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. And Libnah revolted at that time.

23Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 24So Joram rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

Ahaziah Reigns in Judah

25In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign. 26Ahaziah *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri, king of Israel. 27And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab, for he *was* the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.

28Now he went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. 29Then King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

Jehu Anointed King of Israel

9 And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, "Get yourself ready, take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead. 2Now when you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and make him rise up from among his associates, and take him to an inner room. 3Then take the flask of oil, and pour *it* on his head, and say, 'Thus says the LORD: "I have anointed you king over Israel." ' Then open the door and flee, and do not delay."

4So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. 5And when he arrived, there *were* the captains of the army sitting; and he said, "I have a message for you, Commander."

Jehu said, "For which *one* of us?"

And he said, "For you, Commander." 6Then he arose and went into the house. And he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, over Israel. 7You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. 8For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab all the

8:21 [a]Spelled *Jehoram* in verse 16

males in Israel, both bond and free. 9So I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. 10The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the plot *of ground* at Jezreel, and *there shall be* none to bury *her.'"* And he opened the door and fled.

11Then Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and *one* said to him, "*Is* all well? Why did this madman come to you?"

And he said to them, "You know the man and his babble."

12And they said, "A lie! Tell us now."

So he said, "Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I have anointed you king over Israel." '"

13Then each man hastened to take his garment and put *it* under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"

Therefore, when we have looked thoroughly, and searched here and there, we shall not find better songs nor more fitting for the purpose, than the Psalms of David, which the Holy Spirit spoke and made through him. And moreover, when we sing them, we are certain that God puts in our mouths these, as if he himself were singing in us to exalt his glory.

JOHN CALVIN

Joram of Israel Killed

14So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria. 15But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, "If you are so minded, let no one leave *or* escape from the city to go and tell *it* in Jezreel." 16So Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel, for Joram was laid up there; and Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram.

17Now a watchman stood on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came, and said, "I see a company of men."

And Joram said, "Get a horseman and send him to meet them, and let him say, '*Is it* peace?'"

18So the horseman went to meet him, and said, "Thus says the king: '*Is it* peace?'"

And Jehu said, "What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me."

So the watchman reported, saying, "The messenger went to them, but is not coming back."

19Then he sent out a second horseman who came to them, and said, "Thus says the king: '*Is it* peace?'"

And Jehu answered, "What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me."

20So the watchman reported, saying, "He went up to them and is not coming back; and the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously!"

21Then Joram said, "Make ready." And his chariot was made ready. Then Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot; and they went out to meet Jehu, and met him on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite.

22Now it happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, "*Is it* peace, Jehu?"

So he answered, "What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft *are so* many?"

23Then Joram turned around and fled, and said to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!"

24Now Jehu drew his bow with full strength and shot Jehoram between his arms; and the arrow came out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. 25Then *Jehu* said to Bidkar his captain, "Pick *him* up, *and* throw him into the tract of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I were riding together behind Ahab his father, that the LORD laid this burden upon him: 26'Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,' says the LORD, 'and I will repay you in this plot,' says the LORD. Now therefore, take *and* throw him on the plot *of ground,* according to the word of the LORD."

Ahaziah of Judah Killed

27 But when Ahaziah king of Judah saw
this, he fled by the road to Beth Haggan.[a]
So Jehu pursued him, and said, "Shoot him
also in the chariot." *And they shot him* at the
Ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. Then
he fled to Megiddo, and died there. 28 And
his servants carried him in the chariot to
Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb
with his fathers in the City of David. 29 In
the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab,
Ahaziah had become king over Judah.

Jezebel's Violent Death

30 Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel,
Jezebel heard *of it;* and she put paint
on her eyes and adorned her head, and
looked through a window. 31 Then, as Jehu
entered at the gate, she said, "*Is it* peace,
Zimri, murderer of your master?"

32 And he looked up at the window, and
said, "Who *is* on my side? Who?" So two *or*
three eunuchs looked out at him. 33 Then he
said, "Throw her down." So they threw her
down, and *some* of her blood spattered on
the wall and on the horses; and he trampled
her underfoot. 34 And when he had gone in,
he ate and drank. Then he said, "Go now,
see to this accursed *woman,* and bury her,
for she was a king's daughter." 35 So they
went to bury her, but they found no more
of her than the skull and the feet and the
palms of *her* hands. 36 Therefore they came
back and told him. And he said, "This *is*
the word of the LORD, which He spoke by
His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'On
the plot *of ground* at Jezreel dogs shall eat
the flesh of Jezebel;[a] 37 and the corpse of
Jezebel shall be as refuse on the surface of
the field, in the plot at Jezreel, so that they
shall not say, "Here *lies* Jezebel." '"

Ahab's Seventy Sons Killed

10 Now Ahab had seventy sons in
Samaria. And Jehu wrote and sent
letters to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel,[a]
to the elders, and to those who reared
Ahab's *sons,* saying:

2 Now as soon as this letter comes to you,
since your master's sons *are* with you,
and you have chariots and horses, a for-
tified city also, and weapons, 3 choose
the best qualified of your master's sons,
set *him* on his father's throne, and fight
for your master's house.

4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and
said, "Look, two kings could not stand up to
him; how then can we stand?" 5 And he who
was in charge of the house, and he who *was*
in charge of the city, the elders also, and
those who reared *the sons,* sent to Jehu, say-
ing, "We *are* your servants, we will do all you
tell us; but we will not make anyone king.
Do *what is* good in your sight." 6 Then he
wrote a second letter to them, saying:

If you *are* for me and will obey my
voice, take the heads of the men,
your master's sons, and come to me at
Jezreel by this time tomorrow.

Now the king's sons, seventy persons, *were*
with the great men of the city, *who* were rear-
ing them. 7 So it was, when the letter came
to them, that they took the king's sons and
slaughtered seventy persons, put their heads
in baskets and sent *them* to him at Jezreel.

8 Then a messenger came and told him,
saying, "They have brought the heads of
the king's sons."

And he said, "Lay them in two heaps at
the entrance of the gate until morning."

9 So it was, in the morning, that he went
out and stood, and said to all the people,
"You *are* righteous. Indeed I conspired
against my master and killed him; but who
killed all these? 10 Know now that nothing
shall fall to the earth of the word of the
LORD which the LORD spoke concerning the
house of Ahab; for the LORD has done what
He spoke by His servant Elijah." 11 So Jehu
killed all who remained of the house of
Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and
his close acquaintances and his priests,
until he left him none remaining.

Ahaziah's Forty-two Brothers Killed

12 And he arose and departed and went
to Samaria. On the way, at Beth Eked[a] of
the Shepherds, 13 Jehu met with the broth-
ers of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said,
"Who *are* you?"

9:27 [a]Literally *The Garden House* **9:36** [a]1 Kings 21:23 **10:1** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Targum; Septuagint reads *Samaria;* Vulgate reads *city.* **10:12** [a]Or *The Shearing House*

So they answered, "We *are* the brothers of Ahaziah; we have come down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother."

14 And he said, "Take them alive!" So they took them alive, and killed them at the well of Beth Eked, forty-two men; and he left none of them.

The Rest of Ahab's Family Killed

15 Now when he departed from there, he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab, *coming* to meet him; and he greeted him and said to him, "Is your heart right, as my heart *is* toward your heart?"

And Jehonadab answered, "It is."

Jehu said, "If it is, give *me* your hand." So he gave *him* his hand, and he took him up to him into the chariot. 16 Then he said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD." So they had him ride in his chariot. 17 And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to Elijah.

Worshipers of Baal Killed

18 Then Jehu gathered all the people together, and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little, Jehu will serve him much. 19 Now therefore, call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. Let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing shall not live." But Jehu acted deceptively, with the intent of destroying the worshipers of Baal. 20 And Jehu said, "Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal." So they proclaimed *it.* 21 Then Jehu sent throughout all Israel; and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. So they came into the temple[a] of Baal, and the temple of Baal was full from one end to the other. 22 And he said to the one in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out vestments for all the worshipers of Baal." So he brought out vestments for them. 23 Then Jehu and Jehonadab the son of Rechab went into the temple of Baal, and said to the worshipers of Baal, "Search and see that no servants of the LORD are here with you, but only the worshipers of Baal." 24 So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had appointed for himself eighty men on the outside, and had said, "*If* any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escapes, *whoever lets him escape, it shall be* his life for the life of the other."

25 Now it happened, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, "Go in *and* kill them; let no one come out!" And they killed them with the edge of the sword; then the guards and the officers threw *them* out, and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal. 26 And they brought the *sacred* pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them. 27 Then they broke down the *sacred* pillar of Baal, and tore down the temple of Baal and made it a refuse dump to this day. 28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel.

29 However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, *that is,* from the golden calves that *were* at Bethel and Dan. 30 And the LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing *what is* right in My sight, *and* have done to the house of Ahab all that *was* in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth *generation.*" 31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin.

Death of Jehu

32 In those days the LORD began to cut off *parts* of Israel; and Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel 33 from the Jordan eastward: all the land of Gilead—Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh—from Aroer, which *is* by the River Arnon, including Gilead and Bashan.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, all that he did, and all his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 35 So Jehu rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Jehoahaz his son reigned in his place. 36 And the period that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria *was* twenty-eight years.

Athaliah Reigns in Judah

11 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose

10:21 [a]Literally *house,* and so elsewhere in this chapter

and destroyed all the royal heirs. [2]But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons *who were* being murdered; and they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom, from Athaliah, so that he was not killed. [3]So he was hidden with her in the house of the LORD for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

Joash Crowned King of Judah

[4]In the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of hundreds—of the bodyguards and the escorts—and brought them into the house of the LORD to him. And he made a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son. [5]Then he commanded them, saying, "This *is* what you shall do: one-third of you who come on duty on the Sabbath shall be keeping watch over the king's house, [6]one-third *shall be* at the gate of Sur, and one-third at the gate behind the escorts. You shall keep the watch of the house, lest it be broken down. [7]The two contingents of you who go off duty on the Sabbath shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD for the king. [8]But you shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes within range, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king as he goes out and as he comes in."

[9]So the captains of the hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Each of them took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. [10]And the priest gave the captains of hundreds the spears and shields which *had belonged* to King David, that were in the temple of the LORD. [11]Then the escorts stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, all around the king, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, by the altar and the house. [12]And he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and *gave him* the Testimony;[a] they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, "Long live the king!"

Death of Athaliah

[13]Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the escorts *and* the people, she came to the people *in* the temple of the LORD. [14]When she looked, there was the king standing by a pillar according to custom; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. So Athaliah tore her clothes and cried out, "Treason! Treason!"

[15]And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the army, and said to them, "Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not let her be killed in the house of the LORD." [16]So they seized her; and she went by way of the horses' entrance *into* the king's house, and there she was killed.

[17]Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD, the king, and the people, that they should be the LORD's people, and *also* between the king and the people. [18]And all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal, and tore it down. They thoroughly broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD. [19]Then he took the captains of hundreds, the bodyguards, the escorts, and all the people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and went by way of the gate of the escorts to the king's house. Then he sat on the throne of the kings. [20]So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword *in* the king's house. [21]Jehoash *was* seven years old when he became king.

Jehoash Repairs the Temple

12 In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash[a] became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beersheba. [2]Jehoash did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. [3]But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

[4]And Jehoash said to the priests, "All

11:12 [a]That is, the Law (compare Exodus 25:16, 21 and Deuteronomy 31:9) **12:1** [a]Spelled *Joash* in 11:2ff

the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the LORD—each man's census money, each man's assessment money[a]—*and* all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the LORD, [5]let the priests take *it* themselves, each from his constituency; and let them repair the damages of the temple, wherever any dilapidation is found."

[6]Now it was so, by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, *that* the priests had not repaired the damages of the temple. [7]So King Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the *other* priests, and said to them, "Why have you not repaired the damages of the temple? Now therefore, do not take *more* money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing the damages of the temple." [8]And the priests agreed that they would neither receive *more* money from the people, nor repair the damages of the temple.

[9]Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the LORD; and the priests who kept the door put there all the money brought into the house of the LORD. [10]So it was, whenever they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up and put it in bags, and counted the money that was found in the house of the LORD. [11]Then they gave the money, which had been apportioned, into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they paid it out to the carpenters and builders who worked on the house of the LORD, [12]and to masons and stonecutters, and for buying timber and hewn stone, to repair the damage of the house of the LORD, and for all that was paid out to repair the temple. [13]However there were not made for the house of the LORD basins of silver, trimmers, sprinkling-bowls, trumpets, any articles of gold or articles of silver, from the money brought into the house of the LORD. [14]But they gave that to the workmen, and they repaired the house of the LORD with it. [15]Moreover they did not require an account from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to be paid to workmen, for they dealt faithfully. [16]The money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the LORD. It belonged to the priests.

Hazael Threatens Jerusalem

[17]Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it; then Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. [18]And Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred things that his fathers, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and in the king's house, and sent *them* to Hazael king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.

Death of Joash

[19]Now the rest of the acts of Joash,[a] and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

[20]And his servants arose and formed a conspiracy, and killed Joash in the house of the Millo,[a] which goes down to Silla. [21]For Jozachar[a] the son of Shimeath and Jehozabad the son of Shomer,[b] his servants, struck him. So he died, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

Jehoahaz Reigns in Israel

13 In the twenty-third year of Joash[a] the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years. [2]And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. He did not depart from them.

[3]Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-Hadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days. [4]So Jehoahaz pleaded with the LORD, and the LORD listened to him; for He saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. [5]Then the LORD gave Israel a deliverer, so that they escaped from under the hand of the Syrians; and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents as before. [6]Nevertheless they

12:4 [a]Compare Leviticus 27:2ff **12:19** [a]Spelled *Jehoash* in 12:1ff **12:20** [a]Literally *The Landfill* **12:21** [a]Called *Zabad* in 2 Chronicles 24:26 [b]Called *Shimrith* in 2 Chronicles 24:26 **13:1** [a]Spelled *Jehoash* in 12:1ff

did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin, *but* walked in them; and the wooden image[a] also remained in Samaria. [7]For He left of the army of Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers; for the king of Syria had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing.

[8]Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? [9]So Jehoahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Joash his son reigned in his place.

Jehoash Reigns in Israel

[10]In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash[a] the son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years. [11]And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, *but* walked in them.

[12]Now the rest of the acts of Joash, all that he did, and his might with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? [13]So Joash rested with his fathers. Then Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Death of Elisha

[14]Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!"

[15]And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So he took himself a bow and some arrows. [16]Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So he put his hand *on it,* and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. [17]And he said, "Open the east window"; and he opened *it.* Then Elisha said, "Shoot"; and he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed *them.*" [18]Then he said, "Take the arrows"; so he took *them.* And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground"; so he struck three times, and stopped. [19]And the man of God was angry with him, and said, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed *it!* But now you will strike Syria *only* three times."

[20]Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the *raiding* bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. [21]So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band *of raiders;* and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.

Israel Recaptures Cities from Syria

[22]And Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. [23]But the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and regarded them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence.

[24]Now Hazael king of Syria died. Then Ben-Hadad his son reigned in his place. [25]And Jehoash[a] the son of Jehoahaz recaptured from the hand of Ben-Hadad, the son of Hazael, the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times Joash defeated him and recaptured the cities of Israel.

Amaziah Reigns in Judah

14 In the second year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, became king. [2]He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. [3]And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like his father David; he did everything as his father Joash had done. [4]However the high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

[5]Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established in his hand, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. [6]But the children of the

13:6 [a]Hebrew *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess **13:10** [a]Spelled *Joash* in verse 9 **13:25** [a]Spelled *Joash* in verses 12–14, 25

murderers he did not execute, according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, in which the LORD commanded, saying, "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall be put to death for his own sin."[a]

7He killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and took Sela by war, and called its name Joktheel to this day.

8Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash[a] the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face one another *in battle.*" 9And Jehoash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife'; and a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 10You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Glory *in that,* and stay at home; for why should you meddle with trouble so that you fall—you and Judah with you?"

11But Amaziah would not heed. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went out; so he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. 12And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. 13Then Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth Shemesh; and he went to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate—four hundred cubits. 14And he took all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

15Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did—his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 16So Jehoash rested with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Then Jeroboam his son reigned in his place.

17Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 18Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 19And they formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. 20Then they brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the City of David.

21And all the people of Judah took Azariah,[a] who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. 22He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers.

Jeroboam II Reigns in Israel

23In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, *and reigned* forty-one years. 24And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 25He restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He had spoken through

14:6 [a]Deuteronomy 24:16 **14:8** [a]Spelled *Joash* in 13:12ff and 2 Chronicles 25:17ff **14:21** [a]Called *Uzziah* in 2 Chronicles 26:1ff, Isaiah 6:1, and elsewhere



His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who *was* from Gath Hepher. 26For the LORD saw *that* the affliction of Israel *was* very bitter; and whether bond or free, there was no helper for Israel. 27And the LORD did not say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

28Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did—his might, how he made war, and how he recaptured for Israel, from Damascus and Hamath, *what had belonged* to Judah—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 29So Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. Then Zechariah his son reigned in his place.

Azariah Reigns in Judah

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, became king. 2He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 3And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done, 4except that the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. 5Then the LORD struck the king, so that he was a leper until the day of his death; so he dwelt in an isolated house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the *royal* house, judging the people of the land.

6Now the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 7So Azariah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

Zechariah Reigns in Israel

8In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria six months. 9And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 10Then Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and struck and killed him in front of the people; and he reigned in his place.

11Now the rest of the acts of Zechariah, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

12This *was* the word of the LORD which He spoke to Jehu, saying, "Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth *generation.*"[a] And so it was.

Shallum Reigns in Israel

13Shallum the son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah[a] king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. 14For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, came to Samaria, and struck Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him; and he reigned in his place.

15Now the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy which he led, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 16Then from Tirzah, Menahem attacked Tiphsah, all who *were* there, and its territory. Because they did not surrender, therefore he attacked *it.* All the women there who were with child he ripped open.

Menahem Reigns in Israel

17In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi became king over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria. 18And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 19Pul[a] king of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his control. 20And Menahem exacted the money from Israel, from all the very wealthy, from each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land.

21Now the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 22So Menahem rested with his fathers. Then Pekahiah his son reigned in his place.

15:12 [a]2 Kings 10:30 **15:13** [a]Called *Azariah* in 14:21 ff and 15:1 ff **15:19** [a]That is, Tiglath-Pileser III (compare verse 29)

Pekahiah Reigns in Israel

23In the fiftieth year of Azariah king
of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem
became king over Israel in Samaria, *and*
reigned two years. 24And he did evil in the
sight of the LORD; he did not depart from
the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who
had made Israel sin. 25Then Pekah the son
of Remaliah, an officer of his, conspired
against him and killed him in Samaria, in
the citadel of the king's house, along with
Argob and Arieh; and with him were fifty
men of Gilead. He killed him and reigned
in his place.

26Now the rest of the acts of Pekahiah,
and all that he did, indeed they *are* written
in the book of the chronicles of the kings
of Israel.

Pekah Reigns in Israel

27In the fifty-second year of Azariah
king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah
became king over Israel in Samaria, *and*
reigned twenty years. 28And he did evil in the
sight of the LORD; he did not depart from
the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who
had made Israel sin. 29In the days of Pekah
king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria
came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah,
Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee,
all the land of Naphtali; and he carried
them captive to Assyria. 30Then Hoshea the
son of Elah led a conspiracy against Pekah
the son of Remaliah, and struck and killed
him; so he reigned in his place in the twen-
tieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

31Now the rest of the acts of Pekah, and
all that he did, indeed they *are* written in
the book of the chronicles of the kings of
Israel.

Jotham Reigns in Judah

32In the second year of Pekah the son of
Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of
Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign. 33He
was twenty-five years old when he became
king, and he reigned sixteen years in
Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jerusha[a]
the daughter of Zadok. 34And he did *what*
was right in the sight of the LORD; he did
according to all that his father Uzziah had
done. 35However the high places were not
removed; the people still sacrificed and
burned incense on the high places. He built
the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD.

36Now the rest of the acts of Jotham,
and all that he did, *are* they not written in
the book of the chronicles of the kings of
Judah? 37In those days the LORD began to
send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son
of Remaliah against Judah. 38So Jotham
rested with his fathers, and was buried
with his fathers in the City of David his
father. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his
place.

Ahaz Reigns in Judah

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah
the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of
Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. 2Ahaz
was twenty years old when he became king,
and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem;
and he did not do *what was* right in the sight
of the LORD his God, as his father David
had done. 3But he walked in the way of the
kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass
through the fire, according to the abomi-
nations of the nations whom the LORD had
cast out from before the children of Israel.
4And he sacrificed and burned incense on
the high places, on the hills, and under
every green tree.

5Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the
son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to
Jerusalem to *make* war; and they besieged
Ahaz but could not overcome *him.* 6At that
time Rezin king of Syria captured Elath for
Syria, and drove the men of Judah from
Elath. Then the Edomites[a] went to Elath,
and dwell there to this day.

7So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-
Pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I *am* your
servant and your son. Come up and save
me from the hand of the king of Syria and
from the hand of the king of Israel, who
rise up against me." 8And Ahaz took the sil-
ver and gold that was found in the house
of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the
king's house, and sent *it as* a present to
the king of Assyria. 9So the king of Assyria
heeded him; for the king of Assyria went
up against Damascus and took it, carried
its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.

15:33 [a]Spelled *Jerushah* in 2 Chronicles 27:1 **16:6** [a]Some ancient authorities read *Syrians.*

[10]Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. [11]Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made *it* before King Ahaz came back from Damascus. [12]And when the king came back from Damascus, the king saw the altar; and the king approached the altar and made offerings on it. [13]So he burned his burnt offering and his grain offering; and he poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar. [14]He also brought the bronze altar which *was* before the LORD, from the front of the temple—from between the *new* altar and the house of the LORD—and put it on the north side of the *new* altar. [15]Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "On the great *new* altar burn the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt sacrifice, and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. And the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire *by*." [16]Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded.

[17]And King Ahaz cut off the panels of the carts, and removed the lavers from them; and he took down the Sea from the bronze oxen that *were* under it, and put it on a pavement of stones. [18]Also he removed the Sabbath pavilion which they had built in the temple, and he removed the king's outer entrance from the house of the LORD, on account of the king of Assyria.

[19]Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? [20]So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

Hoshea Reigns in Israel

17 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, *and he reigned* nine years. [2]And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel who were before him. [3]Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him; and Hoshea became his vassal, and paid him tribute money. [4]And the king of Assyria uncovered a conspiracy by Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

Israel Carried Captive to Assyria

[5]Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. [6]In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

[7]For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, [8]and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. [9]Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that *were* not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city. [10]They set up for themselves *sacred* pillars and wooden images[a] on every high hill and under every green tree. [11]There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger, [12]for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this thing."

[13]Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments *and* My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." [14]Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks,

17:10 [a]Hebrew *Asherim*, Canaanite deities

like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God. 15And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and *went* after the nations who *were* all around them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them. 16So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molded image *and* two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. 17And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 18Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.

19Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. 20And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight. 21For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and made them commit a great sin. 22For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, 23until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, *as it is* to this day.

Assyria Resettles Samaria

24Then the king of Assyria brought *people* from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities. 25And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed *some* of them. 26So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land." 27Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land." 28Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

As a Christian we know why a work of art has value . . . because a work of art is a work of creativity, and creativity has value because God is the Creator.

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER

29However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put *them* in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, *every* nation in the cities where they dwelt. 30The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. 32So they feared the LORD, and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. 33They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away.

34To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the LORD had commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel, 35with whom the LORD had made a covenant and charged them, saying: "You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them; 36but the LORD, who brought you up from the land of

Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice. 37And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods. 38And the covenant that I have made with you, you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods. 39But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies." 40However they did not obey, but they followed their former rituals. 41So these nations feared the LORD, yet served their carved images; also their children and their children's children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day.

Hezekiah Reigns in Judah

18 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, *that* Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Abi[a] the daughter of Zechariah. 3And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

4He removed the high places and broke the *sacred* pillars, cut down the wooden image[a] and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.[b] 5He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses. 7The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

9Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. 10And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is,* the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. 11Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, 12because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed His covenant *and* all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do *them.*

13And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. 14Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15So Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. 16At that time Hezekiah stripped *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD

17Then the king of Assyria sent *the* Tartan,[a] *the* Rabsaris,[b] *and the* Rabshakeh[c] from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they had come up, they went and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which *was* on the highway to the Fuller's Field. 18And when they had called to the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them. 19Then *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence *is* this in which you trust? 20You speak of *having* plans and power for war; but *they are* mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? 21Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his

18:2 [a]Called *Abijah* in 2 Chronicles 29:1ff **18:4** [a]Hebrew *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess [b]Literally *Bronze Thing* **18:17** [a]A title, probably *Commander in Chief* [b]A title, probably *Chief Officer* [c]A title, probably *Chief of Staff* or *Governor*

hand and pierce it. So *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. 22But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' *is* it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?" ' 23Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! 24How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? 25Have I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'"

26Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it;* and do not speak to us in Hebrew[a] in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall."

27But *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

28Then *the* Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and spoke, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! 29Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; 30nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ' 31Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; 32until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die. But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." 33Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 34Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? 35Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?'"

36But the people held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." 37Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the* Rabshakeh.

Isaiah Assures Deliverance

19 And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it,* that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 3And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day *is* a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there is* no strength to bring them forth. 4It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

5So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 7Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." '"

Sennacherib's Threat and Hezekiah's Prayer

8Then *the* Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. 9And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "Look, he has come out to make war with you."

18:26 [a]Literally *Judean*

So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah,
saying, [10]"Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah
king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your God
in whom you trust deceive you, saying,
"Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand
of the king of Assyria." [11]Look! You have
heard what the kings of Assyria have done
to all lands by utterly destroying them; and
shall you be delivered? [12]Have the gods
of the nations delivered those whom my
fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran
and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who
were in Telassar? [13]Where *is* the king of
Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of
the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?'"

[14]And Hezekiah received the letter from
the hand of the messengers, and read it;
and Hezekiah went up to the house of the
LORD, and spread it before the LORD. [15]Then
Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said:
"O LORD God of Israel, *the One* who dwells
between the cherubim, You are God, You
alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth.
You have made heaven and earth. [16]Incline
Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes,
O LORD, and see; and hear the words of
Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach
the living God. [17]Truly, LORD, the kings of
Assyria have laid waste the nations and their
lands, [18]and have cast their gods into the
fire; for they *were* not gods, but the work of
men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore
they destroyed them. [19]Now therefore, O
LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand,
that all the kingdoms of the earth may know
that You *are* the LORD God, You alone."

The Word of the LORD Concerning Sennacherib

[20]Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to
Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God
of Israel: 'Because you have prayed to Me
against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have
heard.' [21]This *is* the word which the LORD
has spoken concerning him:

'The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
Has shaken *her* head behind your back!

[22] 'Whom have you reproached and
blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised *your*
voice,
And lifted up your eyes on high?
Against the Holy *One* of Israel.
[23] By your messengers you have
reproached the Lord,
And said: "By the multitude of my
chariots
I have come up to the height of the
mountains,
To the limits of Lebanon;
I will cut down its tall cedars
And its choice cypress trees;
I will enter the extremity of its borders,
To its fruitful forest.
[24] I have dug and drunk strange water,
And with the soles of my feet I have
dried up
All the brooks of defense."

[25] 'Did you not hear long ago
How I made it,
From ancient times that I formed it?
Now I have brought it to pass,
That you should be
For crushing fortified cities *into* heaps
of ruins.
[26] Therefore their inhabitants had little
power;
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field
And the green herb,
As the grass on the housetops
And *grain* blighted before it is grown.

[27] 'But I know your dwelling place,
Your going out and your coming in,
And your rage against Me.



28 Because your rage against Me and
your tumult
Have come up to My ears,
Therefore I will put My hook in your
nose
And My bridle in your lips,
And I will turn you back
By the way which you came.

29 'This *shall be* a sign to you:

You shall eat this year such as grows
of itself,
And in the second year what springs
from the same;
Also in the third year sow and reap,
Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of
them.
30 And the remnant who have escaped
of the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward.
31 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant,
And those who escape from Mount
Zion.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts[a] will
do this.'

32 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria:

'He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield,
Nor build a siege mound against it.
33 By the way that he came,
By the same shall he return;
And he shall not come into this city,'
Says the LORD.
34 'For I will defend this city, to save it
For My own sake and for My servant
David's sake.'"

Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

35 And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel[a] of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home,* and remained at Nineveh. 37 Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah's Life Extended

20 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.'"

2 Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, 3 "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done *what was* good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5 "Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. 6 And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David." '"

7 Then Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs." So they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.

8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What *is* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?"

9 Then Isaiah said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken: *shall* the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?"

10 And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees."

11 So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.

19:31 [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts and ancient versions (compare Isaiah 37:32); Masoretic Text omits *of hosts.* **19:35** [a]Or *Angel*

The Babylonian Envoys

12 At that time Berodach-Baladan[a] the
son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent let-
ters and a present to Hezekiah, for he
heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13 And
Hezekiah was attentive to them, and showed
them all the house of his treasures—the
silver and gold, the spices and precious
ointment, and all[a] his armory—all that
was found among his treasures. There was
nothing in his house or in all his dominion
that Hezekiah did not show them.

14 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King
Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these
men say, and from where did they come to
you?"

So Hezekiah said, "They came from a
far country, from Babylon."

15 And he said, "What have they seen in
your house?"

So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen
all that *is* in my house; there is nothing
among my treasures that I have not shown
them."

16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear
the word of the LORD: 17 'Behold, the days
are coming when all that *is* in your house,
and what your fathers have accumulated
until this day, shall be carried to Babylon;
nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. 18 'And
they shall take away some of your sons
who will descend from you, whom you will
beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the
palace of the king of Babylon.'"

19 So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The
word of the LORD which you have spoken
is good!" For he said, "Will there not be
peace and truth at least in my days?"

Death of Hezekiah

20 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—
all his might, and how he made a pool
and a tunnel and brought water into the
city—*are* they not written in the book of
the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 21 So
Hezekiah rested with his fathers. Then
Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

Manasseh Reigns in Judah

21 Manasseh *was* twelve years old when
he became king, and he reigned fifty-
five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name
was Hephzibah. 2 And he did evil in the sight
of the LORD, according to the abominations
of the nations whom the LORD had cast out
before the children of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt
the high places which Hezekiah his father
had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal,
and made a wooden image,[a] as Ahab king
of Israel had done; and he worshiped all
the host of heaven[b] and served them. 4 He
also built altars in the house of the LORD,
of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I
will put My name." 5 And he built altars for
all the host of heaven in the two courts of
the house of the LORD. 6 Also he made his son
pass through the fire, practiced soothsay-
ing, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists
and mediums. He did much evil in the sight
of the LORD, to provoke *Him* to anger. 7 He
even set a carved image of Asherah[a] that he
had made, in the house of which the LORD
had said to David and to Solomon his son,
"In this house and in Jerusalem, which I
have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel,
I will put My name forever; 8 and I will not
make the feet of Israel wander anymore from
the land which I gave their fathers—only if
they are careful to do according to all that
I have commanded them, and according
to all the law that My servant Moses com-
manded them." 9 But they paid no attention,
and Manasseh seduced them to do more
evil than the nations whom the LORD had
destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the LORD spoke by His servants
the prophets, saying, 11 "Because Manasseh
king of Judah has done these abominations
(he has acted more wickedly than all the
Amorites who *were* before him, and has also
made Judah sin with his idols), 12 therefore
thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Behold, *I*
am bringing *such* calamity upon Jerusalem
and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both
his ears will tingle. 13 And I will stretch over
Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria
and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I
will wipe Jerusalem as *one* wipes a dish, wip-
ing *it* and turning *it* upside down. 14 So I will
forsake the remnant of My inheritance and
deliver them into the hand of their enemies;
and they shall become victims of plunder to

20:12 [a]Spelled *Merodach-Baladan* in Isaiah 39:1 **20:13** [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Targum; Masoretic Text omits *all*. **21:3** [a]Hebrew *Asherah*, a Canaanite goddess [b]The gods of the Assyrians **21:7** [a]A Canaanite goddess

all their enemies, [15]because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.'"

[16]Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

[17]Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh—all that he did, and the sin that he committed—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? [18]So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

Amon's Reign and Death

[19]Amon *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. [20]And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. [21]So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. [22]He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD.

[23]Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. [24]But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

[25]Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? [26]And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

Josiah Reigns in Judah

22 Josiah *was* eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. [2]And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Hilkiah Finds the Book of the Law

[3]Now it came to pass, in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of the LORD, saying: [4]"Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. [5]And let them deliver it into the hand of those doing the work, who are the overseers in the house of the LORD; let them give it to those who *are* in the house of the LORD doing the work, to repair the damages of the house— [6]to carpenters and builders and masons—and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. [7]However there need be no accounting made with them of the money delivered into their hand, because they deal faithfully."

[8]Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. [9]So Shaphan the scribe went to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "Your servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work, who oversee the house of the LORD." [10]Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

[11]Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. [12]Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor[a] the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, [13]"Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

[14]So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the

22:12 [a]*Abdon the son of Micah* in 2 Chronicles 34:20

wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke with her. 15Then she said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me, 16"Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read— 17because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched.'" ' 18But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "*Concerning* the words which you have heard— 19because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard *you*," says the LORD. 20"Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place." '" So they brought back word to the king.

When you hear a great piece of music, you realize your mind and imagination have been enlarged, and you can think thoughts that you couldn't have thought other how.

N.T. WRIGHT

Josiah Restores True Worship

23 Now the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him. 2The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD.

3Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all *his* heart and all *his* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant. 4And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah,[a] and for all the host of heaven;[b] and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. 5Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. 6And he brought out the wooden image[a] from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground *it* to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people. 7Then he tore down the *ritual* booths of the perverted persons[a] that *were* in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image. 8And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; also he broke down the high places at the gates which *were* at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* to the left of the city gate. 9Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren.

10And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the Valley of the Son[a] of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. 11Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who *was* in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun

23:4 [a]A Canaanite goddess [b]The gods of the Assyrians **23:6** [a]Hebrew *Asherah*, a Canaanite goddess **23:7** [a]Hebrew *qedeshim*, that is, those practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals **23:10** [a]Kethib reads *Sons*.

with fire. 12The altars that *were* on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron. 13Then the king defiled the high places that *were* east of Jerusalem, which *were* on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon. 14And he broke in pieces the *sacred* pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men.

15Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place *and* crushed *it* to powder, and burned the wooden image. 16As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that *were* there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned *them* on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. 17Then he said, "What gravestone *is* this that I see?"

So the men of the city told him, "*It is* the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel."

18And he said, "Let him alone; let no one move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

19Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD[a] to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel. 20He executed all the priests of the high places who *were* there, on the altars, and burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.

21Then the king commanded all the people, saying, "Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as *it is* written in this Book of the Covenant." 22Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. 23But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the LORD in Jerusalem. 24Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did *any* arise like him.

Impending Judgment on Judah

26Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. 27And the LORD said, "I will also remove Judah from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"[a]

Josiah Dies in Battle

28Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 29In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And *Pharaoh Necho* killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him. 30Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoahaz

31Jehoahaz *was* twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32And he did evil in the sight of

23:19 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text and Targum omit *the* LORD. **23:27** [a]1 Kings 8:29

the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. 33Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 34Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And *Pharaoh* took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he[a] died there.

Jehoiakim Reigns in Judah

35So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give *it* to Pharaoh Necho. 36Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. 37And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

Judah Overrun by Enemies

24 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal *for* three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. 2And the LORD sent against him *raiding* bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servants the prophets. 3Surely at the commandment of the LORD *this* came upon Judah, to remove *them* from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.

5Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 6So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

7And the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoiachin

8Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name *was* Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

10At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. 12Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, in the eighth year of his reign, took him prisoner.

The Captivity of Jerusalem

13And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. 14Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. 15And he carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all *who were* strong *and* fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

Zedekiah Reigns in Judah

17Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, *Jehoiachin's*[a] uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

18Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's

23:34 [a]That is, Jehoahaz **24:17** [a]Literally *his*

name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. [19]He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. [20]For because of the anger of the LORD *this* happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

The Fall and Captivity of Judah

25 Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. [2]So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. [3]By the ninth *day* of the *fourth* month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.

[4]Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war *fled* at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans *were* still encamped all around against the city. And *the king*[a] went by way of the plain.[b] [5]But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. [6]So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. [7]Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.

[8]And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month (which *was* the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. [9]He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. [10]And all the army of the Chaldeans who *were with* the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

[11]Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people *who* remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude. [12]But the captain of the guard left *some* of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers. [13]The bronze pillars that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that *were* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried their bronze to Babylon. [14]They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered. [15]The firepans and the basins, the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. [16]The two pillars, one Sea, and the carts, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. [17]The height of one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the capital on it *was* of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits, and the network and pomegranates all around the capital were all of bronze. The second pillar was the same, with a network.

[18]And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. [19]He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, five men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the chief recruiting officer of the army, who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land *who were* found in the city. [20]So Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. [21]Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

Gedaliah Made Governor of Judah

[22]Then he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left. [23]Now when all the captains of the armies, they and *their* men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael the son of Nethaniah,

25:4 [a]Literally *he* [b]Or *Arabah*, that is, the Jordan Valley

Johanan the son of Careah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah[a] the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. [24]And Gedaliah took an oath before them and their men, and said to them, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."

[25]But it happened in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah, the Jews, as well as the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. [26]And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

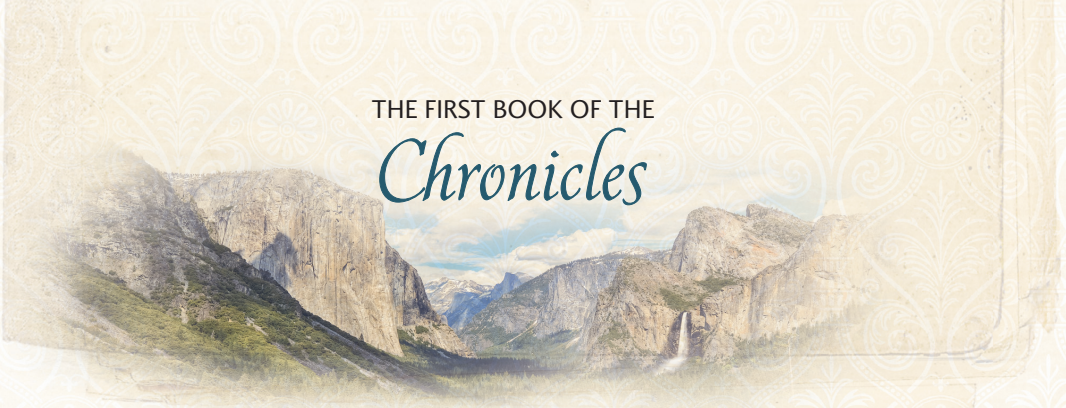
Jehoiachin Released from Prison

[27]Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh *day* of the month, *that* Evil-Merodach[a] king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. [28]He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon. [29]So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. [30]And as for his provisions, *there was* a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

25:23 [a]Spelled *Jezaniah* in Jeremiah 40:8 **25:27** [a]Literally *Man of Marduk*

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE

Chronicles



The Family of Adam—Seth to Abraham

1 Adam, Seth, Enosh, 2Cainan,[a] Mahalalel, Jared, 3Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, 4Noah,[a] Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

5The sons of Japheth *were* Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. 6The sons of Gomer *were* Ashkenaz, Diphath,[a] and Togarmah. 7The sons of Javan *were* Elishah, Tarshishah,[a] Kittim, and Rodanim.[b]

8The sons of Ham *were* Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. 9The sons of Cush *were* Seba, Havilah, Sabta,[a] Raama,[b] and Sabtecha. The sons of Raama *were* Sheba and Dedan. 10Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. 11Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, 12Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and the Caphtorim). 13Canaan begot Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth; 14the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; 15the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; 16the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.

17The sons of Shem *were* Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.[a] 18Arphaxad begot Shelah, and Shelah begot Eber. 19To Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg,[a] for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan. 20Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 21Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 22Ebal,[a] Abimael, Sheba, 23Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan.

24Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, 25Eber, Peleg, Reu, 26Serug, Nahor, Terah, 27and Abram, who *is* Abraham. 28The sons of Abraham *were* Isaac and Ishmael.

The Family of Ishmael

29These *are* their genealogies: The firstborn of Ishmael *was* Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 30Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad,[a] Tema, 31Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These *were* the sons of Ishmael.

The Family of Keturah

32Now the sons born to Keturah, Abraham's concubine, *were* Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. The sons of Jokshan *were* Sheba and Dedan. 33The sons of Midian *were* Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

The Family of Isaac

34And Abraham begot Isaac. The sons of Isaac *were* Esau and Israel. 35The sons of Esau *were* Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. 36And the sons of Eliphaz *were* Teman, Omar, Zephi,[a] Gatam, *and* Kenaz; and *by* Timna,[b] Amalek. 37The sons of Reuel *were* Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

The Family of Seir

38The sons of Seir *were* Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. 39And the sons of Lotan *were* Hori and Homam; Lotan's sister *was* Timna. 40The sons of Shobal *were* Alian,[a] Manahath, Ebal, Shephi,[b] and Onam. The sons of Zibeon *were* Ajah and Anah. 41The son of Anah *was* Dishon. The sons of Dishon *were* Hamran,[a] Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. 42The sons of Ezer *were* Bilhan, Zaavan, *and* Jaakan.[a] The sons of Dishan *were* Uz and Aran.

The Kings of Edom

43Now these *were* the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king reigned

1:2 [a]Hebrew *Qenan* **1:4** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint adds *the sons of Noah.* **1:6** [a]Spelled *Riphath* in Genesis 10:3 **1:7** [a]Spelled *Tarshish* in Genesis 10:4 [b]Spelled *Dodanim* in Genesis 10:4 **1:9** [a]Spelled *Sabtah* in Genesis 10:7 [b]Spelled *Raamah* in Genesis 10:7 **1:17** [a]Spelled *Mash* in Genesis 10:23 **1:19** [a]Literally *Division* **1:22** [a]Spelled *Obal* in Genesis 10:28 **1:30** [a]Spelled *Hadar* in Genesis 25:15 **1:36** [a]Spelled *Zepho* in Genesis 36:11 [b]Compare Genesis 36:12 **1:40** [a]Spelled *Alvan* in Genesis 36:23 [b]Spelled *Shepho* in Genesis 36:23 **1:41** [a]Spelled *Hemdan* in Genesis 36:26 **1:42** [a]Spelled *Akan* in Genesis 36:27

over the children of Israel: Bela the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. 44And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. 45When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. 46And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. The name of his city *was* Avith. 47When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. 48And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-by-the-River reigned in his place. 49When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. 50And when Baal-Hanan died, Hadad[a] reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Pai.[b] His wife's name was Mehetabel the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. 51Hadad died also. And the chiefs of Edom were Chief Timnah, Chief Aliah,[a] Chief Jetheth, 52Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, 53Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, 54Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These *were* the chiefs of Edom.

The Family of Israel

2 These *were* the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, 2Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

From Judah to David

3The sons of Judah *were* Er, Onan, and Shelah. *These* three were born to him by the daughter of Shua, the Canaanitess. Er, the firstborn of Judah, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; so He killed him. 4And Tamar, his daughter-in-law, bore him Perez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah *were* five.

5The sons of Perez *were* Hezron and Hamul. 6The sons of Zerah *were* Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara—five of them in all.

7The son of Carmi *was* Achar,[a] the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the accursed thing.

8The son of Ethan *was* Azariah.

9Also the sons of Hezron who were born to him *were* Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai.[a] 10Ram begot Amminadab, and Amminadab begot Nahshon, leader of the children of Judah; 11Nahshon begot Salma,[a] and Salma begot Boaz; 12Boaz begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesse; 13Jesse begot Eliab his firstborn, Abinadab the second, Shimea[a] the third, 14Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, 15Ozem the sixth, *and* David the seventh.

16Now their sisters *were* Zeruiah and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah *were* Abishai, Joab, and Asahel—three. 17Abigail bore Amasa; and the father of Amasa *was* Jether the Ishmaelite.[a]

The Family of Hezron

18Caleb the son of Hezron had children by Azubah, *his* wife, and by Jerioth. Now these were her sons: Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. 19When Azubah died, Caleb took Ephrath[a] as his wife, who bore him Hur. 20And Hur begot Uri, and Uri begot Bezalel.

21Now afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he *was* sixty years old; and she bore him Segub. 22Segub begot Jair, who had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. 23(Geshur and Syria took from them the towns of Jair, with Kenath and its towns—sixty towns.) All these *belonged to* the sons of Machir the father of Gilead. 24After Hezron died in Caleb Ephrathah, Hezron's wife Abijah bore him Ashhur the father of Tekoa.

The Family of Jerahmeel

25The sons of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron, *were* Ram, the firstborn, and Bunah, Oren, Ozem, *and* Ahijah. 26Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. 27The sons of Ram, the firstborn of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. 28The sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. The sons of Shammai *were* Nadab and Abishur.

29And the name of the wife of Abishur *was* Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. 30The sons of Nadab *were* Seled and Appaim; Seled died without children. 31The son of Appaim *was* Ishi, the son of Ishi *was* Sheshan, and Sheshan's son *was* Ahlai. 32The sons of Jada, the brother of Shammai, *were* Jether and Jonathan; Jether died without

1:50 [a]Spelled *Hadar* in Genesis 36:39 [b]Spelled *Pau* in Genesis 36:39
1:51 [a]Spelled *Alvah* in Genesis 36:40 **2:7** [a]Spelled *Achan* in Joshua 7:1 and elsewhere **2:9** [a]Spelled *Caleb* in 2:18, 42 **2:11** [a]Spelled *Salmon* in Ruth 4:21 and Luke 3:32 **2:13** [a]Spelled *Shammah* in 1 Samuel 16:9 and elsewhere **2:17** [a]Compare 2 Samuel 17:25 **2:19** [a]Spelled *Ephrathah* elsewhere

children. 33The sons of Jonathan *were* Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel.

34Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters. And Sheshan had an Egyptian servant whose name *was* Jarha. 35Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant as wife, and she bore him Attai. 36Attai begot Nathan, and Nathan begot Zabad; 37Zabad begot Ephlal, and Ephlal begot Obed; 38Obed begot Jehu, and Jehu begot Azariah; 39Azariah begot Helez, and Helez begot Eleasah; 40Eleasah begot Sismai, and Sismai begot Shallum; 41Shallum begot Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begot Elishama.

The Family of Caleb

42The descendants of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel *were* Mesha, his firstborn, who was the father of Ziph, and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron. 43The sons of Hebron *were* Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. 44Shema begot Raham the father of Jorkoam, and Rekem begot Shammai. 45And the son of Shammai *was* Maon, and Maon *was* the father of Beth Zur.

46Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza, and Gazez; and Haran begot Gazez. 47And the sons of Jahdai *were* Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.

48Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. 49She also bore Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah and the father of Gibea. And the daughter of Caleb *was* Achsah.

50These were the descendants of Caleb: The sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, *were* Shobal the father of Kirjath Jearim, 51Salma the father of Bethlehem, *and* Hareph the father of Beth Gader.

52And Shobal the father of Kirjath Jearim had descendants: Haroeh, *and* half of the *families of* Manuhoth.[a] 53The families of Kirjath Jearim *were* the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraites. From these came the Zorathites and the Eshtaolites.

54The sons of Salma *were* Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth Beth Joab, half of the Manahethites, and the Zorites.

55And the families of the scribes who dwelt at Jabez *were* the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, *and* the Suchathites. These *were* the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.

The Family of David

3 Now these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: The firstborn *was* Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second, Daniel,[a] by Abigail the Carmelitess; 2the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; 3the fifth, Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah.

4*These* six were born to him in Hebron. There he reigned seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 5And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea,[a] Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon—four by Bathshua[b] the daughter of Ammiel.[c] 6Also *there* were Ibhar, Elishama,[a] Eliphelet,[b] 7Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 8Elishama, Eliada,[a] and Eliphelet—nine *in all*. 9*These were* all the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines, and Tamar their sister.

The Family of Solomon

10Solomon's son *was* Rehoboam; Abijah[a] *was* his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, 11Joram[a] his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash[b] his son, 12Amaziah his son, Azariah[a] his son, Jotham his son, 13Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, 14Amon his son, *and* Josiah his son. 15The sons of Josiah *were* Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, and the fourth Shallum.[a] 16The sons of Jehoiakim *were* Jeconiah his son *and* Zedekiah[a] his son.

The Family of Jeconiah

17And the sons of Jeconiah[a] *were* Assir,[b] Shealtiel his son, 18*and* Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. 19The sons of Pedaiah *were* Zerubbabel and Shimei. The sons of Zerubbabel *were* Meshullam, Hananiah, Shelomith their sister, 20and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-Hesed—five *in all*.

2:52 [a]Same as *the Manahethites*, verse 54 **3:1** [a]Called *Chileab* in 2 Samuel 3:3 **3:5** [a]Spelled *Shammua* in 14:4 and 2 Samuel 5:14 [b]Spelled *Bathsheba* in 2 Samuel 11:3 [c]Called *Eliam* in 2 Samuel 11:3 **3:6** [a]Spelled *Elishua* in 14:5 and 2 Samuel 5:15 [b]Spelled *Elpelet* in 14:5 **3:8** [a]Spelled *Beeliada* in 14:7 **3:10** [a]Spelled *Abijam* in 1 Kings 15:1 **3:11** [a]Spelled *Jehoram* in 2 Kings 1:17 and 8:16 [b]Spelled *Jehoash* in 2 Kings 12:1 **3:12** [a]Called *Uzziah* in Isaiah 6:1 **3:15** [a]Called *Jehoahaz* in 2 Kings 23:31 **3:16** [a]Compare 2 Kings 24:17 **3:17** [a]Also called *Coniah* in Jeremiah 22:24 and *Jehoiachin* in 2 Kings 24:8 [b]Or *Jeconiah the captive were*

21 The sons of Hananiah *were* Pelatiah and
Jeshaiah, the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of
Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, and the sons
of Shechaniah. 22 The son of Shechaniah
was Shemaiah. The sons of Shemaiah
were Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and
Shaphat—six *in all.* 23 The sons of Neariah
were Elioenai, Hezekiah, and Azrikam—
three *in all.* 24 The sons of Elioenai *were*
Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Joha-
nan, Delaiah, and Anani—seven *in all.*

The Family of Judah

4 The sons of Judah *were* Perez, Hezron,
Carmi, Hur, and Shobal. 2 And Reaiah
the son of Shobal begot Jahath, and Jahath
begot Ahumai and Lahad. These *were* the
families of the Zorathites. 3 These *were the*
sons of the father of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma,
and Idbash; and the name of their sis-
ter *was* Hazelelponi; 4 and Penuel *was* the
father of Gedor, and Ezer *was the* father of
Hushah.

These *were* the sons of Hur, the firstborn
of Ephrathah the father of Bethlehem.

5 And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two
wives, Helah and Naarah. 6 Naarah bore him
Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni, and Haahashtari.
These *were* the sons of Naarah. 7 The sons of
Helah *were* Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan; 8 and
Koz begot Anub, Zobebah, and the families
of Aharhel the son of Harum.

9 Now Jabez was more honorable than his
brothers, and his mother called his name
Jabez,[a] saying, "Because I bore *him* in pain."
10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel say-
ing, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed,
and enlarge my territory, that Your hand
would be with me, and that You would keep
me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So
God granted him what he requested.

11 Chelub the brother of Shuhah begot
Mehir, who *was* the father of Eshton. 12 And
Eshton begot Beth-Rapha, Paseah, and
Tehinnah the father of Ir-Nahash. These
were the men of Rechah.

13 The sons of Kenaz *were* Othniel and
Seraiah. The sons of Othniel *were* Hathath,[a]
14 and Meonothai *who* begot Ophrah. Seraiah
begot Joab the father of Ge Harashim,[a] for
they were craftsmen. 15 The sons of Caleb
the son of Jephunneh *were* Iru, Elah, and
Naam. The son of Elah *was* Kenaz. 16 The
sons of Jehallelel *were* Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria,
and Asarel. 17 The sons of Ezrah *were* Jether,
Mered, Epher, and Jalon. And *Mered's wife*[a]
bore Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah the
father of Eshtemoa. 18 (His wife Jehudijah[a]
bore Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the
father of Sochoh, and Jekuthiel the father of
Zanoah.) And these were the sons of Bithiah
the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took.

19 The sons of Hodiah's wife, the sister
of Naham, *were* the fathers of Keilah the
Garmite and of Eshtemoa the Maachathite.
20 And the sons of Shimon *were* Amnon,
Rinnah, Ben-Hanan, and Tilon. And the
sons of Ishi *were* Zoheth and Ben-Zoheth.

21 The sons of Shelah the son of Judah
were Er the father of Lecah, Laadah the
father of Mareshah, and the families of the
house of the linen workers of the house of
Ashbea; 22 also Jokim, the men of Chozeba,
and Joash; Saraph, who ruled in Moab,
and Jashubi-Lehem. Now the records are
ancient. 23 These *were* the potters and those
who dwell at Netaim[a] and Gederah;[b] there
they dwelt with the king for his work.

The Family of Simeon

24 The sons of Simeon *were* Nemuel,
Jamin, Jarib,[a] Zerah,[b] *and* Shaul, 25 Shallum
his son, Mibsam his son, and Mishma his
son. 26 And the sons of Mishma *were* Hamuel
his son, Zacchur his son, and Shimei his
son. 27 Shimei had sixteen sons and six
daughters; but his brothers did not have
many children, nor did any of their families
multiply as much as the children of Judah.

28 They dwelt at Beersheba, Moladah,
Hazar Shual, 29 Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30 Bethuel,
Hormah, Ziklag, 31 Beth Marcaboth, Hazar
Susim, Beth Biri, and at Shaaraim. These
were their cities until the reign of David.
32 And their villages *were* Etam, Ain, Rimmon,
Tochen, and Ashan—five cities— 33 and
all the villages that *were* around these cit-
ies as far as Baal.[a] These *were* their dwelling
places, and they maintained their geneal-
ogy: 34 Meshobab, Jamlech, and Joshah the
son of Amaziah; 35 Joel, and Jehu the son
of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son

4:9 [a]Literally *He Will Cause Pain* **4:13** [a]Septuagint and Vulgate add *and Meonothai.* **4:14** [a]Literally *Valley of Craftsmen* **4:17** [a]Literally *she* **4:18** [a]Or *His Judean wife* **4:23** [a]Literally *Plants* [b]Literally *Hedges* **4:24** [a]Called *Jachin* in Genesis 46:10 [b]Called *Zohar* in Genesis 46:10 **4:33** [a]Or *Baalath Beer* (compare Joshua 19:8)

of Asiel; [36]Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, and Benaiah; [37]Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah— [38]these mentioned by name *were* leaders in their families, and their father's house increased greatly.

[39]So they went to the entrance of Gedor, as far as the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. [40]And they found rich, good pasture, and the land *was* broad, quiet, and peaceful; for some Hamites formerly lived there.

[41]These recorded by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and they attacked their tents and the Meunites who were found there, and utterly destroyed them, as it is to this day. So they dwelt in their place, because *there was* pasture for their flocks there. [42]Now *some* of them, five hundred men of the sons of Simeon, went to Mount Seir, having as their captains Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. [43]And they defeated the rest of the Amalekites who had escaped. They have dwelt there to this day.

The Family of Reuben

5 Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he *was* indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; [2]yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him *came* a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's— [3]the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

[4]The sons of Joel *were* Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, [5]Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, [6]and Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-Pileser[a] king of Assyria carried into captivity. He *was* leader of the Reubenites. [7]And his brethren by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was registered: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, [8]and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in Aroer, as far as Nebo and Baal Meon. [9]Eastward they settled as far as the entrance of the wilderness this side of the River Euphrates, because their cattle had multiplied in the land of Gilead.

[10]Now in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagrites, who fell by their hand; and they dwelt in their tents throughout the entire *area* east of Gilead.

The Family of Gad

[11]And the children of Gad dwelt next to them in the land of Bashan as far as Salcah: [12]Joel *was* the chief, Shapham the next, then Jaanai and Shaphat in Bashan, [13]and their brethren of their father's house: Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jachan, Zia, and Eber—seven *in all*. [14]These *were* the children of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; [15]Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, *was* chief of their father's house. [16]And *the Gadites* dwelt in Gilead, in Bashan and in its villages, and in all the common-lands of Sharon within their borders. [17]All these were registered by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

[18]The sons of Reuben, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh *had* forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty valiant men, men able to bear shield and sword, to shoot with the bow, and skillful in war, who went to war. [19]They made war with the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. [20]And

5:6 [a]Hebrew *Tilgath-Pilneser*



they were helped against them, and the Hagrites were delivered into their hand, and all who *were* with them, for they cried out to God in the battle. He heeded their prayer, because they put their trust in Him. 21Then they took away their livestock—fifty thousand of their camels, two hundred and fifty thousand of their sheep, and two thousand of their donkeys—also one hundred thousand of their men; 22for many fell dead, because the war *was* God's. And they dwelt in their place until the captivity.

The Family of Manasseh (East)

23So the children of the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land. Their *numbers* increased from Bashan to Baal Hermon, that is, to Senir, or Mount Hermon. 24These *were* the heads of their fathers' houses: Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were mighty men of valor, famous men, *and* heads of their fathers' houses.

25And they were unfaithful to the God of their fathers, and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. 26So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, that is, Tiglath-Pileser[a] king of Assyria. He carried the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan to this day.

The Family of Levi

6 The sons of Levi *were* Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 2The sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 3The children of Amram *were* Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. And the sons of Aaron *were* Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 4Eleazar begot Phinehas, *and* Phinehas begot Abishua; 5Abishua begot Bukki, and Bukki begot Uzzi; 6Uzzi begot Zerahiah, and Zerahiah begot Meraioth; 7Meraioth begot Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub; 8Ahitub begot Zadok, and Zadok begot Ahimaaz; 9Ahimaaz begot Azariah, and Azariah begot Johanan; 10Johanan begot Azariah (it was he who ministered as priest in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem); 11Azariah begot Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub; 12Ahitub begot Zadok, and Zadok begot Shallum; 13Shallum begot Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begot Azariah; 14Azariah begot Seraiah, and Seraiah begot Jehozadak. 15Jehozadak went *into captivity* when the LORD carried Judah and Jerusalem into captivity by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

16The sons of Levi *were* Gershon,[a] Kohath, and Merari. 17These are the names of the sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei. 18The sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 19The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. Now these *are* the families of the Levites according to their fathers: 20Of Gershon *were* Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, 21Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, *and* Jeatherai his son. 22The sons of Kohath *were* Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, 23Elkanah his son, Ebiasaph his son, Assir his son, 24Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziah his son, and Shaul his son. 25The sons of Elkanah *were* Amasai and Ahimoth. 26*As for* Elkanah,[a] the sons of Elkanah *were* Zophai[b] his son, Nahath[c] his son, 27Eliab[a] his son, Jeroham his son, *and* Elkanah his son. 28The sons of Samuel *were* Joel[a] the firstborn, and Abijah the second.[b] 29The sons of Merari *were* Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, 30Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, *and* Asaiah his son.

> *Now these are the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest.*
>
> 1 CHRONICLES 6:31

Musicians in the House of the LORD

31Now these are the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest. 32They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order.

5:26 [a]Hebrew *Tilgath-Pilneser* **6:16** [a]Hebrew *Gershom* (alternate spelling of *Gershon*, as in verses 1, 17, 20, 43, 62, and 71) **6:26** [a]Compare verse 35 [b]Spelled *Zuph* in verse 35 and 1 Samuel 1:1 [c]Compare verse 34 **6:27** [a]Compare verse 34 **6:28** [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic (compare verse 33 and 1 Samuel 8:2) [b]Hebrew *Vasheni*

33 And these *are* the ones who ministered
with their sons: Of the sons of the Kohathites
were Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the
son of Samuel, 34 the son of Elkanah, the
son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel,[a] the son of
Toah,[b] 35 the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah,
the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, 36 the
son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of
Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, 37 the son of
Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph,
the son of Korah, 38 the son of Izhar, the son
of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel.
39 And his brother Asaph, who stood at his
right hand, *was* Asaph the son of Berachiah,
the son of Shimea, 40 the son of Michael,
the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchijah,
41 the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the
son of Adaiah, 42 the son of Ethan, the son
of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, 43 the son of
Jahath, the son of Gershon, the son of Levi.
44 Their brethren, the sons of Merari, on
the left hand, *were* Ethan the son of Kishi,
the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, 45 the
son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the
son of Hilkiah, 46 the son of Amzi, the son
of Bani, the son of Shamer, 47 the son of
Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari,
the son of Levi.
48 And their brethren, the Levites, *were*
appointed to every kind of service of the
tabernacle of the house of God.

The Family of Aaron

49 But Aaron and his sons offered sacri-
fices on the altar of burnt offering and on
the altar of incense, for all the work of the
Most Holy *Place,* and to make atonement
for Israel, according to all that Moses the
servant of God had commanded. 50 Now
these *are* the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his
son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son,
51 Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah
his son, 52 Meraioth his son, Amariah his
son, Ahitub his son, 53 Zadok his son, *and*
Ahimaaz his son.

Dwelling Places of the Levites

54 Now these *are* their dwelling places
throughout their settlements in their ter-
ritory, for they were *given* by lot to the sons
of Aaron, of the family of the Kohathites:
55 They gave them Hebron in the land of
Judah, with its surrounding common-lands.
56 But the fields of the city and its villages
they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh.
57 And to the sons of Aaron they gave *one of*
the cities of refuge, Hebron; also Libnah
with its common-lands, Jattir, Eshtemoa
with its common-lands, 58 Hilen[a] with its
common-lands, Debir with its common-
lands, 59 Ashan[a] with its common-lands,
and Beth Shemesh with its common-lands.
60 And from the tribe of Benjamin: Geba
with its common-lands, Alemeth[a] with
its common-lands, and Anathoth with
its common-lands. All their cities among
their families *were* thirteen.
61 To the rest of the family of the tribe
of the Kohathites *they gave* by lot ten cit-
ies from half the tribe of Manasseh. 62 And
to the sons of Gershon, throughout their
families, *they gave* thirteen cities from the
tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher,
from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the
tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. 63 To the sons
of Merari, throughout their families, *they*
gave twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben,
from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe
of Zebulun. 64 So the children of Israel gave
these cities with their common-lands to
the Levites. 65 And they gave by lot from
the tribe of the children of Judah, from the
tribe of the children of Simeon, and from
the tribe of the children of Benjamin these
cities which are called by *their* names.
66 Now some of the families of the sons
of Kohath *were given* cities as their territory
from the tribe of Ephraim. 67 And they gave
them *one of* the cities of refuge, Shechem
with its common-lands, in the mountains of
Ephraim, also Gezer with its common-lands,
68 Jokmeam with its common-lands, Beth
Horon with its common-lands, 69 Aijalon with
its common-lands, and Gath Rimmon with
its common-lands. 70 And from the half-tribe
of Manasseh: Aner with its common-lands
and Bileam with its common-lands, for the
rest of the family of the sons of Kohath.
71 From the family of the half-tribe of
Manasseh the sons of Gershon *were given*
Golan in Bashan with its common-lands
and Ashtaroth with its common-lands.
72 And from the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh

6:34 [a]Spelled *Elihu* in 1 Samuel 1:1 [b]Spelled *Tohu* in 1 Samuel 1:1
6:58 [a]Spelled *Holon* in Joshua 21:15 **6:59** [a]Spelled *Ain* in Joshua 21:16
6:60 [a]Spelled *Almon* in Joshua 21:18

with its common-lands, Daberath with its common-lands, [73]Ramoth with its common-lands, and Anem with its common-lands. [74]And from the tribe of Asher: Mashal with its common-lands, Abdon with its common-lands, [75]Hukok with its common-lands, and Rehob with its common-lands. [76]And from the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee with its common-lands, Hammon with its common-lands, and Kirjathaim with its common-lands.

[77]From the tribe of Zebulun the rest of the children of Merari *were given* Rimmon[a] with its common-lands and Tabor with its common-lands. [78]And on the other side of the Jordan, across from Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, *they were given* from the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness with its common-lands, Jahzah with its common-lands, [79]Kedemoth with its common-lands, and Mephaath with its common-lands. [80]And from the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its common-lands, Mahanaim with its common-lands, [81]Heshbon with its common-lands, and Jazer with its common-lands.

The Family of Issachar

7 The sons of Issachar *were* Tola, Puah,[a] Jashub, and Shimron—four *in all*. [2]The sons of Tola *were* Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house. *The sons* of Tola *were* mighty men of valor in their generations; their number in the days of David *was* twenty-two thousand six hundred. [3]The son of Uzzi *was* Izrahiah, and the sons of Izrahiah *were* Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Ishiah. All five of them *were* chief men. [4]And with them, by their generations, according to their fathers' houses, *were* thirty-six thousand troops ready for war; for they had many wives and sons.

[5]Now their brethren among all the families of Issachar *were* mighty men of valor, listed by their genealogies, eighty-seven thousand in all.

The Family of Benjamin

[6]*The sons* of Benjamin *were* Bela, Becher, and Jediael—three *in all*. [7]The sons of Bela were Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri—five *in all*. They *were* heads of *their* fathers' houses, and they were listed by their genealogies, twenty-two thousand and thirty-four mighty men of valor.

[8]The sons of Becher *were* Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jerimoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. All these *are* the sons of Becher. [9]And they were recorded by genealogy according to their generations, heads of their fathers' houses, twenty thousand two hundred mighty men of valor. [10]The son of Jediael *was* Bilhan, and the sons of Bilhan *were* Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tharshish, and Ahishahar.

[11]All these sons of Jediael *were* heads of their fathers' houses; *there were* seventeen thousand two hundred mighty men of valor fit to go out for war *and* battle. [12]Shuppim and Huppim[a] *were* the sons of Ir, *and* Hushim *was* the son of Aher.

The Family of Naphtali

[13]The sons of Naphtali *were* Jahziel,[a] Guni, Jezer, and Shallum,[b] the sons of Bilhah.

The Family of Manasseh (West)

[14]The descendants of Manasseh: his Syrian concubine bore him Machir the father of Gilead, the father of Asriel.[a] [15]Machir took as his wife *the sister* of Huppim and Shuppim,[a] whose name *was* Maachah. The name of *Gilead's* grandson[b] *was* Zelophehad,[c] but Zelophehad begot only daughters. [16](Maachah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she called his name Peresh. The name of his brother *was* Sheresh, and his sons *were* Ulam and Rakem. [17]The son of Ulam *was* Bedan.) These *were* the descendants of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.

[18]His sister Hammoleketh bore Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.

[19]And the sons of Shemida were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

The Family of Ephraim

[20]The sons of Ephraim *were* Shuthelah, Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eladah his son, Tahath his son, [21]Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead.

6:77 [a]Hebrew *Rimmono,* alternate spelling of *Rimmon;* see 4:32
7:1 [a]Spelled *Puvah* in Genesis 46:13 **7:12** [a]Called *Hupham* in Numbers 26:39 **7:13** [a]Spelled *Jahzeel* in Genesis 46:24 [b]Spelled *Shillem* in Genesis 46:24 **7:14** [a]The son of Gilead (compare Numbers 26:30, 31)
7:15 [a]Compare verse 12 [b]Literally *the second* [c]Compare Numbers 26:30–33

The men of Gath who were born in *that* land killed *them* because they came down to take away their cattle. 22Then Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.

23And when he went in to his wife, she conceived and bore a son; and he called his name Beriah,[a] because tragedy had come upon his house. 24Now his daughter *was* Sheerah, who built Lower and Upper Beth Horon and Uzzen Sheerah; 25and Rephah *was* his son, *as well* as Resheph, and Telah his son, Tahan his son, 26Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, 27Nun[a] his son, and Joshua his son.

28Now their possessions and dwelling places *were* Bethel and its towns: to the east Naaran, to the west Gezer and its towns, and Shechem and its towns, as far as Ayyah[a] and its towns; 29and by the borders of the children of Manasseh *were* Beth Shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph, the son of Israel.

The Family of Asher

30The sons of Asher *were* Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. 31The sons of Beriah *were* Heber and Malchiel, who was the father of Birzaith.[a] 32And Heber begot Japhlet, Shomer,[a] Hotham,[b] and their sister Shua. 33The sons of Japhlet *were* Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These *were* the children of Japhlet. 34The sons of Shemer *were* Ahi, Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram. 35And the sons of his brother Helem *were* Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal. 36The sons of Zophah *were* Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, 37Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Jithran,[a] and Beera. 38The sons of Jether *were* Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara. 39The sons of Ulla *were* Arah, Haniel, and Rizia.

40All these *were* the children of Asher, heads of *their* fathers' houses, choice men, mighty men of valor, chief leaders. And they were recorded by genealogies among the army fit for battle; their number *was* twenty-six thousand.

The Family Tree of King Saul of Benjamin

8 Now Benjamin begot Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, Aharah[a] the third, 2Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. 3The sons of Bela *were* Addar,[a] Gera, Abihud, 4Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, 5Gera, Shephuphan, and Huram.

6These *are* the sons of Ehud, who were the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the inhabitants of Geba, and who forced them to move to Manahath: 7Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera who forced them to move. He begot Uzza and Ahihud.

8Also Shaharaim had children in the country of Moab, after he had sent away Hushim and Baara his wives. 9By Hodesh his wife he begot Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, 10Jeuz, Sachiah, and Mirmah. These *were* his sons, heads of their fathers' *houses*.

11And by Hushim he begot Abitub and Elpaal. 12The sons of Elpaal *were* Eber, Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod with its towns; 13and Beriah and Shema, who *were* heads of their fathers' *houses* of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who drove out the inhabitants of Gath. 14Ahio, Shashak, Jeremoth, 15Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, 16Michael, Ispah, and Joha *were* the sons of Beriah. 17Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, 18Ishmerai, Jizliah, and Jobab *were* the sons of Elpaal. 19Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, 20Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, 21Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath *were* the sons of Shimei. 22Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, 24Hananiah, Elam, Antothijah, 25Iphdeiah, and Penuel *were* the sons of Shashak. 26Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri *were* the sons of Jeroham.

28These *were* heads of the fathers' *houses* by their generations, chief men. These dwelt in Jerusalem.

29Now the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name *was* Maacah, dwelt at Gibeon. 30And his firstborn son *was* Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, 31Gedor, Ahio, Zecher, 32and Mikloth, *who* begot Shimeah.[a] They also dwelt alongside their relatives in Jerusalem, with their brethren. 33Ner[a] begot Kish, Kish begot Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab,[b] and Esh-Baal.[c] 34The

7:23 [a]Literally *In Tragedy* **7:27** [a]Hebrew *Non* **7:28** [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Bomberg, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *Gazza*. **7:31** [a]Or *Birzavith* or *Birzoth* **7:32** [a]Spelled *Shemer* in verse 34 [b]Spelled *Helem* in verse 35 **7:37** [a]Spelled *Jether* in verse 38 **8:1** [a]Spelled *Ahiram* in Numbers 26:38 **8:3** [a]Called *Ard* in Numbers 26:40 **8:32** [a]Spelled *Shimeam* in 9:38 **8:33** [a]Also the son of Gibeon (compare 9:36, 39) [b]Called *Jishui* in 1 Samuel 14:49 [c]Called *Ishbosheth* in 2 Samuel 2:8 and elsewhere

son of Jonathan *was* Merib-Baal,[a] and Merib-Baal begot Micah. [35]The sons of Micah *were* Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz. [36]And Ahaz begot Jehoaddah;[a] Jehoaddah begot Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begot Moza. [37]Moza begot Binea, Raphah[a] his son, Eleasah his son, *and* Azel his son.

[38]Azel had six sons whose names *were* these: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All these *were* the sons of Azel. [39]And the sons of Eshek his brother *were* Ulam his firstborn, Jeush the second, and Eliphelet the third.

[40]The sons of Ulam were mighty men of valor—archers. *They* had many sons and grandsons, one hundred and fifty *in all.* These *were* all sons of Benjamin.

9 So all Israel was recorded by genealogies, and indeed, they *were* inscribed in the book of the kings of Israel. But Judah was carried away captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness. [2]And the first inhabitants who *dwelt* in their possessions in their cities *were* Israelites, priests, Levites, and the Nethinim.

Dwellers in Jerusalem

[3]Now in Jerusalem the children of Judah dwelt, and some of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh: [4]Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the descendants of Perez, the son of Judah. [5]Of the Shilonites: Asaiah the firstborn and his sons. [6]Of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel, and their brethren—six hundred and ninety. [7]Of the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah; [8]Ibneiah the son of Jeroham; Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri; Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah; [9]and their brethren, according to their generations—nine hundred and fifty-six. All these men *were* heads of a father's *house* in their fathers' houses.

The Priests at Jerusalem

[10]Of the priests: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, and Jachin; [11]Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the officer over the house of God; [12]Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchijah; Maasai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer; [13]and their brethren, heads of their fathers' houses—one thousand seven hundred and sixty. *They were* very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.

The Levites at Jerusalem

[14]Of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; [15]Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph; [16]Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun; and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

The Levite Gatekeepers

[17]And the gatekeepers *were* Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their brethren. Shallum *was* the chief. [18]Until then *they had been* gatekeepers for the camps of the children of Levi at the King's Gate on the east.

[19]Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren, from his father's house, the Korahites, *were* in charge of the work of the service, gatekeepers of the tabernacle. Their fathers had been keepers of the entrance to the camp of the LORD. [20]And Phinehas the son of Eleazar had been the officer over them in time past; the LORD *was* with him. [21]Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah *was* keeper of the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

[22]All those chosen as gatekeepers *were* two hundred and twelve. They were recorded by their genealogy, in their villages. David and Samuel the seer had appointed them to their trusted office. [23]So they and their children *were* in charge of the gates of the house of the LORD, the house of the tabernacle, by assignment. [24]The gatekeepers were assigned to the four directions: the east, west, north, and south. [25]And their brethren in their villages *had* to come with them from time to time for seven days. [26]For

8:34 [a]Called *Mephibosheth* in 2 Samuel 4:4 **8:36** [a]Spelled *Jarah* in 9:42
8:37 [a]Spelled *Rephaiah* in 9:43

in this trusted office *were* four chief gatekeepers; they were Levites. And they had charge over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God. 27And they lodged *all* around the house of God because they *had* the responsibility, and they *were* in charge of opening *it* every morning.

Other Levite Responsibilities

28Now *some* of them were in charge of the serving vessels, for they brought them in and took them out by count. 29*Some* of them *were* appointed over the furnishings and over all the implements of the sanctuary, and over the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the incense and the spices. 30And *some* of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices.

31Mattithiah of the Levites, the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, had the trusted office over the things that were baked in the pans. 32And some of their brethren of the sons of the Kohathites *were* in charge of preparing the showbread for every Sabbath.

33These are the singers, heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites, *who lodged* in the chambers, *and were* free *from other duties;* for they were employed in *that* work day and night. 34These heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites *were* heads throughout their generations. They dwelt at Jerusalem.

The Family of King Saul

35Jeiel the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name *was* Maacah, dwelt at Gibeon. 36His firstborn son *was* Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 37Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah,[a] and Mikloth. 38And Mikloth begot Shimeam.[a] They also dwelt alongside their relatives in Jerusalem, with their brethren. 39Ner begot Kish, Kish begot Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-Baal. 40The son of Jonathan *was* Merib-Baal, and Merib-Baal begot Micah. 41The sons of Micah *were* Pithon, Melech, Tahrea,[a] and Ahaz.[b] 42And Ahaz begot Jarah;[a] Jarah begot Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begot Moza; 43Moza begot Binea, Rephaiah[a] his son, Eleasah his son, and Azel his son.

44And Azel had six sons whose names *were* these: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan; these *were* the sons of Azel.

Tragic End of Saul and His Sons

10 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. 3The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was wounded by the archers. 4Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. 5And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died. 6So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together. 7And when all the men of Israel who *were* in the valley saw that they had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; then the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9And they stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news *in the temple* of their idols and among the people. 10Then they put his armor in the temple of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.

11And when all Jabesh Gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12all the valiant men arose and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons; and they brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

13So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. 14But *he* did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed

9:37 [a]Called *Zecher* in 8:31 **9:38** [a]Spelled *Shimeah* in 8:32
9:41 [a]Spelled *Tarea* in 8:35 [b]Following Arabic, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate (compare 8:35); Masoretic Text and Septuagint omit *and Ahaz.*
9:42 [a]Spelled *Jehoaddah* in 8:36 **9:43** [a]Spelled *Raphah* in 8:37

him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

David Made King over All Israel

11 Then all Israel came together to David at Hebron, saying, "Indeed we *are* your bone and your flesh. [2]Also, in time past, even when Saul was king, you *were* the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over My people Israel.'" [3]Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.

The City of David

[4]And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus, where the Jebusites *were,* the inhabitants of the land. [5]But the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here!" Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). [6]Now David said, "Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and became chief. [7]Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore they called it the City of David. [8]And he built the city around it, from the Millo[a] to the surrounding area. Joab repaired the rest of the city. [9]So David went on and became great, and the LORD of hosts *was* with him.

The Mighty Men of David

[10]Now these *were* the heads of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, with

11:8 [a]Literally *The Landfill*



JANET PASCHAL • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Author, *Homecoming Magazine* Feature Writer

Now these were the heads of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel. | 1 CHRONICLES 11:10

Most scholars agree that the goal of the Book of Chronicles was to emphasize the Jews' continuity with the lineage of King David and the promises the Lord made to him and his people. Chronicles is an attempt to encourage the returning exiles and so focuses on the glories of King David's reign, including the meticulous detailing of David's mighty warriors.

First Chronicles records the rank and file of the banished king's warriors, as well as descriptive examples of their military exploits. Their lineage, their weapons, even their ability to shoot arrows or sling stones with either hand is noted; their perilous journey to Bethlehem for a cup of water is detailed. The writers of Chronicles knew the importance of those who gave his kingship strong support. They knew that the followers were just as critical to God's sovereign plan as the leaders. Whether it was an embrace of the law or historical familiarity that triggered their attention toward those who serve, they, for eternity, etched an enduring statement for servants and followers everywhere: whether you lead the parade or drive the float, we are all called to be faithful, steadfast, and, yes, mighty.

all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel.

[11]And this *is* the number of the mighty men whom David had: Jashobeam the son of a Hachmonite, chief of the captains;[a] he had lifted up his spear against three hundred, killed *by him* at one time.

[12]After him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who *was one* of the three mighty men. [13]He was with David at Pasdammim. Now there the Philistines were gathered for battle, and there was a piece of ground full of barley. So the people fled from the Philistines. [14]But they stationed themselves in the middle of *that* field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.

[15]Now three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the army of the Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. [16]David *was* then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then in Bethlehem. [17]And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" [18]So the three broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that *was* by the gate, and took *it* and brought *it* to David. Nevertheless David would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. [19]And he said, "Far be it from me, O my God, that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men *who have put* their lives *in jeopardy?* For at the risk of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men.

[20]Abishai the brother of Joab was chief of *another* three.[a] He had lifted up his spear against three hundred *men,* killed *them,* and won a name among *these* three. [21]Of the three he was more honored than the other two men. Therefore he became their captain. However he did not attain to the *first* three.

[22]Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. [23]And he killed an Egyptian, a man of *great* height, five cubits tall. In the Egyptian's hand *there was* a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. [24]These *things* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. [25]Indeed he was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the *first* three. And David appointed him over his guard.

[26]Also the mighty warriors *were* Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, [27]Shammoth the Harorite,[a] Helez the Pelonite,[b] [28]Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, [29]Sibbechai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, [30]Maharai the Netophathite, Heled[a] the son of Baanah the Netophathite, [31]Ithai[a] the son of Ribai of Gibeah, of the sons of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, [32]Hurai[a] of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel[b] the Arbathite, [33]Azmaveth the Baharumite,[a] Eliahba the Shaalbonite, [34]the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shageh the Hararite, [35]Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphal the son of Ur, [36]Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, [37]Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, [38]Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, [39]Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite[a] (the armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah), [40]Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, [41]Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, [42]Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite (a chief of the Reubenites) and thirty with him, [43]Hanan the son of Maachah, Joshaphat the Mithnite, [44]Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, [45]Jediael the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, [46]Eliel the Mahavite, Jeribai and Joshaviah the sons of Elnaam, Ithmah the Moabite, [47]Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

The Growth of David's Army

12 Now these *were* the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was still a fugitive from Saul the son of Kish; and they

11:11 [a]Following Qere; Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *the thirty* (compare 2 Samuel 23:8). **11:20** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Syriac reads *thirty.* **11:27** [a]Spelled *Harodite* in 2 Samuel 23:25 [b]Called *Paltite* in 2 Samuel 23:26 **11:30** [a]Spelled *Heleb* in 2 Samuel 23:29 and *Heldai* in 1 Chronicles 27:15 **11:31** [a]Spelled *Ittai* in 2 Samuel 23:29 **11:32** [a]Spelled *Hiddai* in 2 Samuel 23:30 [b]Spelled *Abi-Albon* in 2 Samuel 23:31 **11:33** [a]Spelled *Barhumite* in 2 Samuel 23:31 **11:39** [a]Spelled *Beerothite* in 2 Samuel 23:37

were among the mighty men, helpers in the war, [2]armed with bows, using both the right hand and the left in *hurling* stones and *shooting* arrows with the bow. *They were* of Benjamin, Saul's brethren.

[3]The chief *was* Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; Jeziel and Pelet the sons of Azmaveth; Berachah, and Jehu the Anathothite; [4]Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite; [5]Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite; [6]Elkanah, Jisshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites; [7]and Joelah and Zebadiah the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

[8]*Some* Gadites joined David at the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for battle, who could handle shield and spear, whose faces *were like* the faces of lions, and *were* as swift as gazelles on the mountains: [9]Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, [10]Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, [11]Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, [12]Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, [13]Jeremiah the tenth, and Machbanai the eleventh. [14]These *were* from the sons of Gad, captains of the army; the least was over a hundred, and the greatest was over a thousand. [15]These *are* the ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all its banks; and they put to flight all *those* in the valleys, to the east and to the west.

[16]Then some of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to David at the stronghold. [17]And David went out to meet them, and answered and said to them, "If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart will be united with you; but if to betray me to my enemies, since *there is* no wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look and bring judgment." [18]Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the captains, *and he said:*

"*We are* yours, O David;
We *are* on your side, O son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
And peace to your helpers!
For your God helps you."

So David received them, and made them captains of the troop.

[19]And *some* from Manasseh defected to David when he was going with the Philistines to battle against Saul; but they did not help them, for the lords of the Philistines sent him away by agreement, saying, "He may defect to his master Saul *and endanger* our heads." [20]When he went to Ziklag, those of Manasseh who defected to him were Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai, captains of the thousands who *were* from Manasseh. [21]And they helped David against the bands *of raiders,* for they *were* all mighty men of valor, and they were captains in the army. [22]For at *that* time they came to David day by day to help him, until *it was* a great army, like the army of God.

David's Army at Hebron

[23]Now these *were* the numbers of the divisions *that were* equipped for war, *and* came to David at Hebron to turn *over* the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD: [24]of the sons of Judah bearing shield and spear, six thousand eight hundred armed for war; [25]of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor fit for war, seven thousand one hundred; [26]of the sons of Levi four thousand six hundred; [27]Jehoiada, the leader of the Aaronites, and with him three thousand seven hundred; [28]Zadok, a young man, a valiant warrior, and from his father's house twenty-two captains; [29]of the sons of Benjamin, relatives of Saul, three thousand (until then the greatest part of them had remained loyal to the house of Saul); [30]of the sons of Ephraim twenty thousand eight hundred, mighty men of valor, famous men throughout their father's house; [31]of the half-tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand, who were designated by name to come and make David king; [32]of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command; [33]of Zebulun there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks; [34]of Naphtali one thousand captains, and with them thirty-seven thousand with shield and spear; [35]of the Danites who could keep

battle formation, twenty-eight thousand six hundred; [36]of Asher, those who could go out to war, able to keep battle formation, forty thousand; [37]of the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, from the other side of the Jordan, one hundred and twenty thousand armed for battle with every *kind* of weapon of war.

[38]All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel *were* of one mind to make David king. [39]And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brethren had prepared for them. [40]Moreover those who were near to them, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food on donkeys and camels, on mules and oxen—provisions of flour and cakes of figs and cakes of raisins, wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly, for *there was* joy in Israel.

The Ark Brought from Kirjath Jearim

13 Then David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, *and* with every leader. [2]And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If *it seems* good to you, and if it is of the LORD our God, let us send out to our brethren everywhere *who are* left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites *who are* in their cities *and* their common-lands, that they may gather together to us; [3]and let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul." [4]Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

[5]So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor in Egypt to as far as the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim. [6]And David and all Israel went up to Baalah,[a] to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD, who dwells *between* the cherubim, where *His* name is proclaimed. [7]So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. [8]Then David and all Israel played *music* before God with all *their* might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets.

> *Then David and all Israel played music before God with all their might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets.*
>
> 1 CHRONICLES 13:8

[9]And when they came to Chidon's[a] threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. [10]Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. [11]And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzza; therefore that place is called Perez Uzza[a] to this day. [12]David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God to me?"

[13]So David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. [14]The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that he had.

David Established at Jerusalem

14 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, with masons and carpenters, to build him a house. [2]So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, for his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel.

[3]Then David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David begot more sons and daughters. [4]And these are the names of his children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua,[a] Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, [5]Ibhar, Elishua,[a] Elpelet,[b] [6]Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, [7]Elishama, Beeliada,[a] and Eliphelet.

The Philistines Defeated

[8]Now when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard *of it* and went

13:6 [a]Called *Baale Judah* in 2 Samuel 6:2 **13:9** [a]Called *Nachon* in 2 Samuel 6:6 **13:11** [a]Literally *Outburst Against Uzza* **14:4** [a]Spelled *Shimea* in 3:5 **14:5** [a]Spelled *Elishama* in 3:6 [b]Spelled *Eliphelet* in 3:6 **14:7** [a]Spelled *Eliada* in 3:8

out against them. [9]Then the Philistines went and made a raid on the Valley of Rephaim. [10]And David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?"

The LORD said to him, "Go up, for I will deliver them into your hand."

[11]So they went up to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there. Then David said, "God has broken through my enemies by my hand like a breakthrough of water." Therefore they called the name of that place Baal Perazim.[a] [12]And when they left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire.

[13]Then the Philistines once again made a raid on the valley. [14]Therefore David inquired again of God, and God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; circle around them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. [15]And it shall be, when you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." [16]So David did as God commanded him, and they drove back the army of the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer. [17]Then the fame of David went

14:11 [a]Literally *Master of Breakthroughs*



JANET PASCHAL • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Author, *Homecoming Magazine* Feature Writer

And David inquired of God. | 1 CHRONICLES 14:10

When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of Israel, they began searching for him. David retreated into the stronghold until he received word that they had raided the Valley of Rephaim. His natural inclination was to defend the valley; however, David did not rush to battle. His response to this and most other events of his life was simple: He inquired of the Lord. He asked, "Shall I go up against the Philistines?" and the Lord answered, "Go" (1 Chr. 14:10).

David drove the Philistines out of the valley and removed their idols. When they returned to the valley, David did not assume that God's response would be the same, but he again reverted to his default response and inquired of the Lord. The Lord's answer was different this time, "You shall not go up after them . . . when you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall go out to battle" (vv. 14, 15). David obeyed the Lord and was again victorious.

When David inquired of the Lord, God exalted him and all nations feared him. When he failed to do so, he made reckless decisions with grievous consequences that radiated to others.

We, too, benefit by inquiring of the Lord for every aspect of our lives. Like He did for David, the Lord has prescribed the best path for our future, and our decisions too carry consequences that go beyond us. Since the Lord hears our petitions even before we ask them, doesn't it make sense that we too inquire of Him?

out into all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

15 *David* built houses for himself in the City of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it. [2]Then David said, "No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the LORD has chosen them to carry the ark of God and to minister before Him forever." [3]And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it. [4]Then David assembled the children of Aaron and the Levites: [5]of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and one hundred and twenty of his brethren; [6]of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and two hundred and twenty of his brethren; [7]of the sons of Gershom, Joel the chief, and one hundred and thirty of his brethren; [8]of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and two hundred of his brethren; [9]of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and eighty of his brethren; [10]of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and one hundred and twelve of his brethren.

[11]And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. [12]He said to them, "You *are* the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to *the place* I have prepared for it. [13]For because you *did* not *do it* the first *time,* the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order."

[14]So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. [15]And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

[16]Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy. [17]So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of their brethren,

Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy.

1 CHRONICLES 15:16

the sons of Merari, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; [18]and with them their brethren of the second *rank:* Zechariah, Ben,[a] Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, and Jeiel, the gatekeepers; [19]the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, *were* to sound the cymbals of bronze; [20]Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with strings according to Alamoth; [21]Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah, to direct with harps on the Sheminith; [22]Chenaniah, leader of the Levites, was instructor *in charge of* the music, because he *was* skillful; [23]Berechiah and Elkanah *were* doorkeepers for the ark; [24]Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, were to blow the trumpets before the ark of God; and Obed-Edom and Jehiah, doorkeepers for the ark.

Chenaniah, leader of the Levites, was instructor in charge of the music, because he was skillful.

1 CHRONICLES 15:22

[25]So David, the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom with joy. [26]And so it was, when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams. [27]David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music

15:18 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint omits *Ben.*

master *with* the singers. David also wore a linen ephod. [28]Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps.

[29]And it happened, *as* the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the City of David, that Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David whirling and playing music; and she despised him in her heart.

Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps.

1 CHRONICLES 15:28

The Ark Placed in the Tabernacle

16 So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. [2]And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. [3]Then he distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece *of meat,* and a cake of raisins.

[4]And he appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the LORD God of Israel: [5]Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, *then* Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-Edom: Jeiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals; [6]Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests regularly *blew* the trumpets before the ark of the covenant of God.

David's Song of Thanksgiving

[7]On that day David first delivered *this psalm* into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the LORD:

Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!

1 CHRONICLES 16:9

[8] Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
[9] Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
[10] Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
[11] Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
[12] Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
[13] O seed of Israel His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!

[14] He *is* the LORD our God;
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
[15] Remember His covenant forever,
The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations,
[16] *The covenant which* He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
[17] And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *for* an everlasting covenant,
[18] Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance,"
[19] When you were few in number,
Indeed very few, and strangers in it.

[20] When they went from one nation to another,
And from *one* kingdom to another people,
[21] He permitted no man to do them wrong;
Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes,
[22] *Saying,* "Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."[a]

16:22 [a]Compare verses 8–22 with Psalm 105:1–15

23 Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
Proclaim the good news of His
salvation from day to day.
24 Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

25 For the LORD *is* great and greatly to
be praised;
He *is* also to be feared above all gods.
26 For all the gods of the peoples *are* idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.
27 Honor and majesty *are* before Him;
Strength and gladness are in His place.

28 Give to the LORD, O families of the
peoples,
Give to the LORD glory and strength.
29 Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name;
Bring an offering, and come before Him.
Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of
holiness!
30 Tremble before Him, all the earth.
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be moved.

31 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the
earth be glad;
And let them say among the nations,
"The LORD reigns."
32 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
Let the field rejoice, and all that *is* in it.
33 Then the trees of the woods shall
rejoice before the LORD,
For He is coming to judge the earth.[a]

34 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He*
is good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.[a]
35 And say, "Save us, O God of our
salvation;
Gather us together, and deliver us
from the Gentiles,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
To triumph in Your praise."

36 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting![a]

And all the people said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

Regular Worship Maintained

37 So he left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD

Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
proclaim the good news of His
salvation from day to day.
1 CHRONICLES 16:23

to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work required; 38 and Obed-Edom with his sixty-eight brethren, including Obed-Edom the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah, *to be* gatekeepers; 39 and Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD at the high place that *was* at Gibeon, 40 to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering regularly morning and evening, and *to do* according to all that is written in the Law of the LORD which He commanded Israel; 41 and with them Heman and Jeduthun and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because His mercy *endures* forever; 42 and with them Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals and the musical instruments of God. Now the sons of Jeduthun *were* gatekeepers.

43 Then all the people departed, every man to his house; and David returned to bless his house.

God's Covenant with David

17 Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD *is* under tent curtains."

2 Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that *is* in your heart, for God *is* with you."

3 But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, 4 "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not build Me a house to dwell in. 5 For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle *to another.* 6 Wherever I have moved about with all Israel, have I ever spoken a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people,

16:33 [a]Compare verses 23–33 with Psalm 96:1–13 **16:34** [a]Compare verse 34 with Psalm 106:1 **16:36** [a]Compare verses 35, 36 with Psalm 106:47, 48

Gospel Songs

Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: "Who am I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O God; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the rank of a man of high degree, O LORD God."

1 CHRONICLES 17:16, 17

"AMAZING GRACE" is one of the world's most beloved hymns, probably because its dramatic story of redemption can resonate with anyone who has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24). The song tells the story of its author, Reverend John Newton. Although Newton's mother hoped he would eventually go into Christian ministry, those hopes seemed to be dashed when she passed away before John was even eight years old, and he ended up sailing the seas with his father at the young age of eleven. Spending his formative years amongst merchant sailors did little to foster his faith. Instead, Newton grew to be an insubordinate and arrogant young man. He ended up being impressed into the British Navy, but rebellious as he was, he fled. When the Navy eventually captured him, they flogged and humiliated him. So when he begged to be discharged to a slave ship, they agreed. That choice proved to be an even worse nightmare. When his attitude and misbehavior caused problems for the rest of the crew, they left him in West Africa with a slave master, essentially reducing Newton to a slave himself.

John Newton had become a true prodigal son if there ever was one (Luke 15:11–32). His father's friend eventually found him and rescued him from his circumstances. But even rescue from such drastic conditions didn't provoke him to repentance. He continued to work on the crew of a slave ship, and one night he found himself in the midst of a torrential storm. It was then that much like the apostles, he realized that only the Lord could rescue him in this storm (Luke 8:22–25). His ship made it through the storm and Newton recalled, "I thought I saw the hand of God displayed in our favour. I began to pray: I could not utter the prayer of faith; I could not draw near to a reconciled God, and call Him Father . . . the comfortless principles of infidelity were deeply riveted; . . . The great question now was, how to obtain faith."

So began Newton's progress toward knowing the one true God—pressing in, reading the Bible, asking questions, and seeking God out in earnest. He stopped drinking, cursing, and gambling. But he still didn't consider himself to have totally given his life to Christ. Finally, while in the throes of a fever as he was working on another slave ship, he came to the point when he knew he had to give his life to Christ completely. Eventually, due to poor health, he was restricted to land and began studying theology in his free time and started preaching. He developed into a powerful evangelical preacher and was ordained in the Anglican church. Newton later publicly criticized human trafficking and openly repented of his participation in the industry.

Some people might have experienced the "many dangers, toils, and snares" that Newton went through and viewed it as a reason to turn their backs on God, but John Newton understood that God is the only one who could save even the most wretched of sinners and regard him "according to the rank of a man of high degree."

Amazing Grace

John Newton, 1779

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright Shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
*Than when we'd first begun.**

*Verse 7 was added by an unknown writer in 1829.

saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'"' 7Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. 8And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a name like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. 9Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 10since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel. Also I will subdue all your enemies. Furthermore I tell you that the LORD will build you a house.[a] 11And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took *it* from *him* who was before you. 14And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever." '"

15According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

16Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: "Who *am* I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? 17And *yet* this was a small thing in Your sight, O God; and You have *also* spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the rank of a man of high degree, O LORD God. 18What more can David *say* to You for the honor of Your servant? For You know Your servant. 19O LORD, for Your servant's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all this greatness, in making known all these great things. 20O LORD, *there is* none like You, nor *is there any* God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 21And who *is* like Your people Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself *as* a people—to make for Yourself a name by great and awesome deeds, by driving out nations from before Your people whom You redeemed from Egypt? 22For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.

23"And now, O LORD, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, *let it* be established forever, and do as You have said. 24So let it be established, that Your name may be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, *is* Israel's God.' And let the house of Your servant David be established before You. 25For You, O my God, have revealed to Your servant that You will build him a house. Therefore Your servant has found it *in his heart* to pray before You. 26And now, LORD, You are God, and have promised this goodness to Your servant. 27Now You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You have blessed it, O LORD, and *it shall be* blessed forever."

David's Further Conquests

18 After this it came to pass that David attacked the Philistines, subdued them, and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines. 2Then he defeated Moab, and the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought tribute.

3And David defeated Hadadezer[a] king of Zobah *as far as* Hamath, as he went to establish his power by the River Euphrates. 4David took from him one thousand chariots, seven thousand[a] horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David hamstrung all the chariot *horses,* except that he spared enough of them for one hundred chariots.

5When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. 6Then David put *garrisons* in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, *and* brought tribute. So the LORD preserved David wherever he went. 7And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8Also from Tibhath[a] and from Chun, cities of Hadadezer, David brought

17:10 [a]That is, a royal dynasty **18:3** [a]Hebrew *Hadarezer,* and so throughout chapters 18 and 19 **18:4** [a]Or *seven hundred* (compare 2 Samuel 8:4) **18:8** [a]Spelled *Betah* in 2 Samuel 8:8

a large amount of bronze, with which Solomon made the bronze Sea, the pillars, and the articles of bronze.

9Now when Tou[a] king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, 10he sent Hadoram[a] his son to King David, to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him (for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou); and *Hadoram brought with him* all kinds of articles of gold, silver, and bronze. 11King David also dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold that he had brought from all *these* nations—from Edom, from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, and from Amalek.

12Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah killed eighteen thousand Edomites[a] in the Valley of Salt. 13He also put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

David's Administration

14So David reigned over all Israel, and administered judgment and justice to all his people. 15Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the army; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; 16Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar *were* the priests; Shavsha[a] *was* the scribe; 17Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons *were* chief ministers at the king's side.

The Ammonites and Syrians Defeated

19 It happened after this that Nahash the king of the people of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his place. 2Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came to Hanun in the land of the people of Ammon to comfort him.

3And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Did his servants not come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?"

4Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved them, and cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. 5Then *some* went and told David about the men; and he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and *then* return."

6When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, Hanun and the people of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia,[a] from Syrian Maacah, and from Zobah.[b] 7So they hired for themselves thirty-two thousand chariots, with the king of Maacah and his people, who came and encamped before Medeba. Also the people of Ammon gathered together from their cities, and came to battle.

8Now when David heard *of it,* he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. 9Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array before the gate of the city, and the kings who had come *were* by themselves in the field.

10When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put *them* in battle array against the Syrians. 11And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, and they set *themselves* in battle array against the people of Ammon. 12Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you. 13Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do *what is* good in His sight."

14So Joab and the people who *were* with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 15When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai his brother, and entered the city. So Joab went to Jerusalem.

16Now when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought the Syrians who were

18:9 [a]Spelled *Toi* in 2 Samuel 8:9, 10 **18:10** [a]Spelled *Joram* in 2 Samuel 8:10 **18:12** [a]Or *Syrians* (compare 2 Samuel 8:13) **18:16** [a]Spelled *Seraiah* in 2 Samuel 8:17 **19:6** [a]Hebrew *Aram Naharaim* [b]Spelled *Zoba* in 2 Samuel 10:6

beyond the River,[a] and Shophach[b] the commander of Hadadezer's army *went* before them. 17When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan and came upon them, and set up in *battle* array against them. So when David had set up in battle array against the Syrians, they fought with him. 18Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven thousand[a] charioteers and forty thousand foot soldiers[b] of the Syrians, and killed Shophach the commander of the army. 19And when the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became his servants. So the Syrians were not willing to help the people of Ammon anymore.

Rabbah Is Conquered

20 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time kings go out *to battle,* that Joab led out the armed forces and ravaged the country of the people of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. And Joab defeated Rabbah and overthrew it. 2Then David took their king's crown from his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and *there were* precious stones in it. And it was set on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance. 3And he brought out the people who *were* in it, and put *them* to work[a] with saws, with iron picks, and with axes. So David did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned *to* Jerusalem.

Philistine Giants Destroyed

4Now it happened afterward that war broke out at Gezer with the Philistines, at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Sippai,[a] *who was one* of the sons of the giant. And they were subdued.

5Again there was war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair[a] killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.

6Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of *great* stature, with twenty-four fingers and toes, six *on each hand* and six *on each foot;* and he also was born to the giant. 7So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea,[a] David's brother, killed him.

8These were born to the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

The Census of Israel and Judah

21 Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. 2So David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba to Dan, and bring the number of them to me that I may know *it*."

3And Joab answered, "May the LORD make His people a hundred times more than they are. But, my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord's servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt in Israel?"

4Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came to Jerusalem. 5Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to David. All Israel *had* one million one hundred thousand men who drew the sword, and Judah *had* four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword. 6But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

7And God was displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel. 8So David said to God, "I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing; but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

9Then the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, 10"Go and tell David, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three *things;* choose one of them for yourself, that I may do *it* to you." '"

11So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Choose for yourself, 12either three[a] years of famine, or three months to be defeated by your foes with the sword of your enemies overtaking *you,* or else for three days the sword of the LORD—the plague in the land, with the angel[b] of

19:16 [a]That is, the Euphrates [b]Spelled *Shobach* in 2 Samuel 10:16
19:18 [a]Or *seven hundred* (compare 2 Samuel 10:18) [b]Or *horsemen* (compare 2 Samuel 10:18) **20:3** [a]Septuagint reads *cut them.*
20:4 [a]Spelled *Saph* in 2 Samuel 21:18 **20:5** [a]Spelled *Jaare-Oregim* in 2 Samuel 21:19 **20:7** [a]Spelled *Shimeah* in 2 Samuel 21:21 and *Shammah* in 1 Samuel 16:9 **21:12** [a]Or *seven* (compare 2 Samuel 24:13)
[b]Or *Angel,* and so elsewhere in this chapter

the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now consider what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

13And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies *are* very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

14So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell. 15And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he[a] was destroying, the LORD looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, "It is enough; now restrain your[b] hand." And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan[c] the Jebusite.

16Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. 17And David said to God, "Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued."

18Therefore, the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19So David went up at the word of Gad, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD. 20Now Ornan turned and saw the angel; and his four sons *who were* with him hid themselves, but Ornan continued threshing wheat. 21So David came to Ornan, and Ornan looked and saw David. And he went out from the threshing floor, and bowed before David with *his* face to the ground. 22Then David said to Ornan, "Grant me the place of *this* threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the LORD. You shall grant it to me at the full price, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people."

23But Ornan said to David, "Take *it* to yourself, and let my lord the king do *what is* good in his eyes. Look, I *also* give *you* the oxen for burnt offerings, the threshing implements for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give *it* all."

24Then King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will surely buy *it* for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings with *that which* costs *me* nothing." 25So David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the place. 26And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the LORD; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering.

27So the LORD commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath.

28At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there. 29For the tabernacle of the LORD and the altar of the burnt offering, which Moses had made in the wilderness, *were* at that time at the high place in Gibeon. 30But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

David Prepares to Build the Temple

22 Then David said, "This *is* the house of the LORD God, and this *is* the altar of burnt offering for Israel." 2So David commanded to gather the aliens who *were* in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God. 3And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails of the doors of the gates and for the joints, and bronze in abundance beyond measure, 4and cedar trees in abundance; for the Sidonians and those from Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.

5Now David said, "Solomon my son *is* young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD *must be* exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it." So David made abundant preparations before his death.

6Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. 7And David said to Solomon: "My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; 8but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall

21:15 [a]Or *He* [b]Or *Your* [c]Spelled *Araunah* in 2 Samuel 24:16

not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. 9Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon,[a] for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. 10He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I *will be* his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' 11Now, my son, may the LORD be with you; and may you prosper, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said to you. 12Only may the LORD give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. 13Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the LORD charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed. 14Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them. 15Moreover *there are* workmen with you in abundance: woodsmen and stonecutters, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work. 16Of gold and silver and bronze and iron *there is* no limit. Arise and begin working, and the LORD be with you."

17David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help Solomon his son, *saying,* 18"*Is* not the LORD your God with you? And has He *not* given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the LORD and before His people. 19Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God. Therefore arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy articles of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD."

The Divisions of the Levites

23 So when David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.

2And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. 3Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and above; and the number of individual males was thirty-eight thousand. 4Of these, twenty-four thousand *were* to look after the work of the house of the LORD, six thousand *were* officers and judges, 5four thousand *were* gatekeepers, and four thousand praised the LORD with *musical* instruments, "which I made," *said David,* "for giving praise."

Four thousand were gatekeepers, and four thousand praised the LORD with musical instruments, "which I made," said David, "for giving praise."
1 CHRONICLES 23:5

6Also David separated them into divisions among the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

7Of the Gershonites: Laadan[a] and Shimei. 8The sons of Laadan: the first Jehiel, then Zetham and Joel—three *in all.* 9The sons of Shimei: Shelomith, Haziel, and Haran—three *in all.* These were the heads of the fathers' *houses* of Laadan. 10And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina,[a] Jeush, and Beriah. These *were* the four sons of Shimei. 11Jahath was the first and Zizah the second. But Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons; therefore they were assigned as one father's house.

12The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel—four *in all.* 13The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses; and Aaron was set apart, he and his sons forever, that he should sanctify the most holy things, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him, and to give the blessing in His name forever. 14Now the sons of Moses the man of God were reckoned to the tribe of Levi. 15The sons of Moses *were* Gershon[a] and Eliezer. 16Of the sons of Gershon, Shebuel[a] *was* the first. 17Of the descendants of Eliezer, Rehabiah was the first. And Eliezer had no

22:9 [a]Literally *Peaceful* **23:7** [a]Spelled *Libni* in Exodus 6:17
23:10 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Zizah* (compare verse 11).
23:15 [a]Hebrew *Gershom* (compare 6:16) **23:16** [a]Spelled *Shubael* in 24:20

other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very many. 18Of the sons of Izhar, Shelomith *was* the first. 19Of the sons of Hebron, Jeriah *was* the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. 20Of the sons of Uzziel, Michah *was* the first and Jesshiah the second.

21The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli *were* Eleazar and Kish. 22And Eleazar died, and had no sons, but only daughters; and their brethren, the sons of Kish, took them *as wives*. 23The sons of Mushi *were* Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth—three *in all*.

24These *were* the sons of Levi by their fathers' houses—the heads of the fathers' *houses* as they were counted individually by the number of their names, who did the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of twenty years and above.

25For David said, "The LORD God of Israel has given rest to His people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem forever"; 26and also to the Levites, "They shall no longer carry the tabernacle, or any of the articles for its service." 27For by the last words of David the Levites *were* numbered from twenty years old and above; 28because their duty *was* to help the sons of Aaron in the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts and in the chambers, in the purifying of all holy things and the work of the service of the house of God, 29both with the showbread and the fine flour for the grain offering, with the unleavened cakes and *what is baked in* the pan, with what is mixed and with all kinds of measures and sizes; 30to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at evening; 31and at every presentation of a burnt offering to the LORD on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons and on the set feasts, by number according to the ordinance governing them, regularly before the LORD; 32and that they should attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, the needs of the holy *place*, and the needs of the sons of Aaron their brethren in the work of the house of the LORD.

The Divisions of the Priests

24 Now *these are* the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron *were* Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2And Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests. 3Then David with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to the schedule of their service.

4There were more leaders found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar, and *thus* they were divided. Among the sons of Eleazar *were* sixteen heads of *their* fathers' houses, and eight heads of their fathers' houses among the sons of Ithamar. 5Thus they were divided by lot, one group as another, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials *of the house* of God, from the sons of Eleazar and from the sons of Ithamar. 6And the scribe, Shemaiah the son of Nethanel, *one of* the Levites, wrote them down before the king, the leaders, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the priests and Levites, one father's house taken for Eleazar and *one* for Ithamar.

7Now the first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, 8the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, 9the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, 10the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, 11the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, 12the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, 13the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, 14the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, 15the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzez,[a] 16the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezekel,[a] 17the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul, 18the twenty-third to Delaiah, the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.

19This *was* the schedule of their service for coming into the house of the LORD according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

Other Levites

20And the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael;[a] of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. 21Concerning Rehabiah, of the sons of Rehabiah, the first *was* Isshiah.

24:15 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Aphses*. **24:16** [a]Masoretic Text reads *Jehezekel*. **24:20** [a]Spelled *Shebuel* in 23:16

22 Of the Izharites, Shelomoth;[a] of the sons of
Shelomoth, Jahath. 23 Of the sons *of Hebron,*[a]
Jeriah *was the first,*[b] Amariah the second,
Jahaziel the third, *and* Jekameam the fourth.
24 *Of* the sons of Uzziel, Michah; of the sons
of Michah, Shamir. 25 The brother of Michah,
Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah.
26 The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi;
the son of Jaaziah, Beno. 27 The sons of Merari
by Jaaziah *were* Beno, Shoham, Zaccur, and
Ibri. 28 Of Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons.
29 Of Kish: the son of Kish, Jerahmeel.

30 Also the sons of Mushi *were* Mahli, Eder,
and Jerimoth. These *were* the sons of the
Levites according to their fathers' houses.

31 These also cast lots just as their brothers the sons of Aaron did, in the presence
of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the
heads of the fathers' *houses* of the priests
and Levites. The chief fathers *did* just as
their younger brethren.

The Musicians

25 Moreover David and the captains of
the army separated for the service
some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of
Jeduthun, who *should* prophesy with harps,
stringed instruments, and cymbals. And
the number of the skilled men performing
their service was: 2 Of the sons of Asaph:
Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah;[a]
the sons of Asaph *were* under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied according
to the order of the king. 3 Of Jeduthun, the
sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri,[a] Jeshaiah,
Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six,[b]
under the direction of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp to give
thanks and to praise the LORD. 4 Of Heman,
the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah,
Uzziel,[a] Shebuel,[b] Jerimoth,[c] Hananiah,
Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-Ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, *and*
Mahazioth. 5 All these *were* the sons of
Heman the king's seer in the words of God,
to exalt his horn.[a] For God gave Heman
fourteen sons and three daughters.

6 All these *were* under the direction of
their father for the music *in* the house of
the LORD, with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps, for the service of the
house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman
were under the authority of the king. 7 So the
number of them, with their brethren who
were instructed in the songs of the LORD,
all who were skillful, *was* two hundred and
eighty-eight.

All these were under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps, for the service of the house of God.
1 CHRONICLES 25:6

So the number of them, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the LORD, all who were skillful, was two hundred and eighty-eight.
1 CHRONICLES 25:7

8 And they cast lots for their duty, the
small as well as the great, the teacher with
the student.

9 Now the first lot for Asaph came out
for Joseph; the second for Gedaliah, him
with his brethren and sons, twelve; 10 the
third for Zaccur, his sons and his brethren,
twelve; 11 the fourth for Jizri,[a] his sons and his
brethren, twelve; 12 the fifth for Nethaniah,
his sons and his brethren, twelve; 13 the sixth
for Bukkiah, his sons and his brethren,
twelve; 14 the seventh for Jesharelah,[a] his sons
and his brethren, twelve; 15 the eighth for
Jeshaiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve;
16 the ninth for Mattaniah, his sons and his
brethren, twelve; 17 the tenth for Shimei, his
sons and his brethren, twelve; 18 the eleventh for Azarel,[a] his sons and his brethren,
twelve; 19 the twelfth for Hashabiah, his sons
and his brethren, twelve; 20 the thirteenth for
Shubael,[a] his sons and his brethren, twelve;
21 the fourteenth for Mattithiah, his sons

24:22 [a]Spelled *Shelomith* in 23:18 **24:23** [a]Supplied from 23:19 (following some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint manuscripts) [b]Supplied from 23:19 (following some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint manuscripts) **25:2** [a]Spelled *Jesharelah* in verse 14 **25:3** [a]Spelled *Jizri* in verse 11 [b]*Shimei,* appearing in one Hebrew and several Septuagint manuscripts, completes the total of six sons (compare verse 17). **25:4** [a]Spelled *Azarel* in verse 18 [b]Spelled *Shubael* in verse 20 [c]Spelled *Jeremoth* in verse 22 **25:5** [a]That is, to increase his power or influence **25:11** [a]Spelled *Zeri* in verse 3 **25:14** [a]Spelled *Asharelah* in verse 2 **25:18** [a]Spelled *Uzziel* in verse 4 **25:20** [a]Spelled *Shebuel* in verse 4

and his brethren, twelve; [22]the fifteenth for Jeremoth,[a] his sons and his brethren, twelve; [23]the sixteenth for Hananiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [24]the seventeenth for Joshbekashah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [25]the eighteenth for Hanani, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [26]the nineteenth for Mallothi, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [27]the twentieth for Eliathah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [28]the twenty-first for Hothir, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [29]the twenty-second for Giddalti, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [30]the twenty-third for Mahazioth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [31]the twenty-fourth for Romamti-Ezer, his sons and his brethren, twelve.

The Gatekeepers

26 Concerning the divisions of the gatekeepers: of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. [2]And the sons of Meshelemiah *were* Zechariah the firstborn, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, [3]Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh.

[4]Moreover the sons of Obed-Edom *were* Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, [5]Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth; for God blessed him.

[6]Also to Shemaiah his son were sons born who governed their fathers' houses, because they *were* men of great ability. [7]The sons of Shemaiah *were* Othni, Rephael, Obed, and Elzabad, whose brothers Elihu and Semachiah *were* able men.

[8]All these *were* of the sons of Obed-Edom, they and their sons and their brethren, able men with strength for the work: sixty-two of Obed-Edom.

[9]And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, eighteen able men.

[10]Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Shimri the first (for *though* he was not the firstborn, his father made him the first), [11]Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth; all the sons and brethren of Hosah *were* thirteen.

[12]Among these *were* the divisions of the gatekeepers, among the chief men, *having* duties just like their brethren, to serve in the house of the LORD. [13]And they cast lots for each gate, the small as well as the great, according to their father's house. [14]The lot for the East *Gate* fell to Shelemiah. Then they cast lots *for* his son Zechariah, a wise counselor, and his lot came out for the North Gate; [15]to Obed-Edom the South Gate, and to his sons the storehouse.[a] [16]To Shuppim and Hosah *the lot came out* for the West Gate, with the Shallecheth Gate on the ascending highway—watchman opposite watchman. [17]On the east *were* six Levites, on the north four each day, on the south four each day, and for the storehouse[a] two by two. [18]As for the Parbar[a] on the west, *there were* four on the highway *and* two at the Parbar. [19]These were the divisions of the gatekeepers among the sons of Korah and among the sons of Merari.

The Treasuries and Other Duties

[20]Of the Levites, Ahijah *was* over the treasuries of the house of God and over the treasuries of the dedicated things. [21]The sons of Laadan, the descendants of the Gershonites of Laadan, heads of their fathers' *houses,* of Laadan the Gershonite: Jehieli. [22]The sons of Jehieli, Zetham and Joel his brother, *were* over the treasuries of the house of the LORD. [23]Of the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites: [24]Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, *was* overseer of the treasuries. [25]And his brethren by Eliezer *were* Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiah his son, Joram his son, Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son.

[26]This Shelomith and his brethren *were* over all the treasuries of the dedicated things which King David and the heads of fathers' *houses,* the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the army, had dedicated. [27]Some of the spoils won in battles they dedicated to maintain the house of the LORD. [28]And all that Samuel the seer, Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah had dedicated, every dedicated *thing,* was under the hand of Shelomith and his brethren.

[29]Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his

25:22 [a]Spelled *Jerimoth* in verse 4 **26:15** [a]Hebrew *asuppim* **26:17** [a]Hebrew *asuppim* **26:18** [a]Probably a court or colonnade extending west of the temple

sons *performed* duties as officials and judges over Israel outside Jerusalem.

30 Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, one thousand seven hundred able men, had the oversight of Israel on the west side of the Jordan for all the business of the LORD, and in the service of the king. 31 Among the Hebronites, Jerijah *was* head of the Hebronites according to his genealogy of the fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought, and there were found among them capable men at Jazer of Gilead. 32 And his brethren *were* two thousand seven hundred able men, heads of fathers' *houses,* whom King David made officials over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, for every matter pertaining to God and the affairs of the king.

The Military Divisions

27 And the children of Israel, according to their number, the heads of fathers' *houses,* the captains of thousands and hundreds and their officers, served the king in every matter of the *military* divisions. *These divisions* came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, each division *having* twenty-four thousand.

2 Over the first division for the first month *was* Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel, and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand; 3 *he was* of the children of Perez, and the chief of all the captains of the army for the first month. 4 Over the division of the second month *was* Dodai[a] an Ahohite, and of his division Mikloth also *was* the leader; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 5 The third captain of the army for the third month *was* Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who was chief; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 6 This was the Benaiah *who was* mighty *among* the thirty, and was over the thirty; in his division *was* Ammizabad his son. 7 The fourth *captain* for the fourth month *was* Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 8 The fifth captain for the fifth month *was* Shamhuth[a] the Izrahite; in his division were twenty-four thousand. 9 The sixth *captain* for the sixth month *was* Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 10 The seventh *captain* for the seventh month *was* Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 11 The eighth *captain* for the eighth month *was* Sibbechai the Hushathite, of the Zarhites; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 12 The ninth *captain* for the ninth month *was* Abiezer the Anathothite, of the Benjamites; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 13 The tenth *captain* for the tenth month *was* Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zarhites; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 14 The eleventh *captain* for the eleventh month *was* Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 15 The twelfth *captain* for the twelfth month *was* Heldai[a] the Netophathite, of Othniel; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

Leaders of Tribes

16 Furthermore, over the tribes of Israel: the officer over the Reubenites *was* Eliezer the son of Zichri; over the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maachah; 17 *over* the Levites, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; over the Aaronites, Zadok; 18 *over* Judah, Elihu, *one* of David's brothers; *over* Issachar, Omri the son of Michael; 19 *over* Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; *over* Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel; 20 *over* the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; *over* the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah; 21 *over* the half–*tribe* of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; *over* Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner; 22 *over* Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These *were* the leaders of the tribes of Israel.

23 But David did not take the number of those twenty years old and under, because the LORD had said He would multiply Israel like the stars of the heavens. 24 Joab the son of Zeruiah began a census, but he did not finish, for wrath came upon Israel because of this census; nor was the number recorded in the account of the chronicles of King David.

27:4 [a]Hebrew *Dodai,* usually spelled *Dodo* (compare 2 Samuel 23:9)
27:8 [a]Spelled *Shammoth* in 11:27 and *Shammah* in 2 Samuel 23:11
27:15 [a]Spelled *Heled* in 11:30 and *Heleb* in 2 Samuel 23:29

Other State Officials

25And Azmaveth the son of Adiel *was* over the king's treasuries; and Jehonathan the son of Uzziah was over the storehouses in the field, in the cities, in the villages, and in the fortresses. 26Ezri the son of Chelub was over those who did the work of the field for tilling the ground. 27And Shimei the Ramathite *was* over the vineyards, and Zabdi the Shiphmite was over the produce of the vineyards for the supply of wine. 28Baal-Hanan the Gederite was over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that *were* in the lowlands, and Joash *was* over the store of oil. 29And Shitrai the Sharonite *was* over the herds that fed in Sharon, and Shaphat the son of Adlai was over the herds *that were* in the valleys. 30Obil the Ishmaelite *was* over the camels, Jehdeiah the Meronothite *was* over the donkeys, 31and Jaziz the Hagrite *was* over the flocks. All these *were* the officials over King David's property.

32Also Jehonathan, David's uncle, *was* a counselor, a wise man, and a scribe; and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni *was* with the king's sons. 33Ahithophel *was* the king's counselor, and Hushai the Archite *was* the king's companion. 34After Ahithophel *was* Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, then Abiathar. And the general of the king's army *was* Joab.

Solomon Instructed to Build the Temple

28 Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the leaders of Israel: the officers of the tribes and the captains of the divisions who served the king, the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officials, the valiant men, and all the mighty men of valor.

2Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Hear me, my brethren and my people: I *had* it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. 3But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you *have been* a man of war and have shed blood.' 4However the LORD God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah *to be* the ruler. And of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make *me* king over all Israel. 5And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. 6Now He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon *who* shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him *to be* My son, and I will be his Father. 7Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.' 8Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave *it* as an inheritance for your children after you forever.

9"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. 10Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it."

11Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; 12and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the



chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; 13also for the division of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD. 14*He gave* gold by weight for *things* of gold, for all articles used in every kind of service; also *silver* for all articles of silver by weight, for all articles used in every kind of service; 15the weight for the lampstands of gold, and their lamps of gold, by weight for each lampstand and its lamps; for the lampstands of silver by weight, for the lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each lampstand. 16And by weight *he gave* gold for the tables of the showbread, for each table, and silver for the tables of silver; 17also pure gold for the forks, the basins, the pitchers of pure gold, and the golden bowls—*he gave gold* by weight for every bowl; and for the silver bowls, *silver* by weight for every bowl; 18and refined gold by weight for the altar of incense, and for the construction of the chariot, that is, the gold cherubim that spread *their wings* and overshadowed the ark of the covenant of the LORD. 19"All *this,*" *said David,* "the LORD made me understand in writing, by *His* hand upon me, all the works of these plans."

20And David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and of good courage, and do *it;* do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—*will be* with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. 21*Here are* the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God; and every willing craftsman *will be* with you for all manner of workmanship, for every kind of service; also the leaders and all the people *will be* completely at your command."

Offerings for Building the Temple

29 Furthermore King David said to all the assembly: "My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, *is* young and inexperienced; and the work *is* great, because the temple[a] *is* not for man but for the LORD God. 2Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for *things to be made of* gold, silver for *things of* silver, bronze for *things of* bronze, iron for *things of* iron, wood for *things of* wood, onyx stones, *stones* to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance. 3Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver: 4three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses; 5the gold for *things of* gold and the silver for *things of* silver, and for all kinds of work *to be done* by the hands of craftsmen. Who *then* is willing to consecrate himself this day to the LORD?"

6Then the leaders of the fathers' *houses,* leaders of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officers over the king's work, offered willingly. 7They gave for the work of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. 8And whoever had *precious* stones gave *them* to the treasury of the house of the LORD, into the hand of Jehiel[a] the Gershonite. 9Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the LORD; and King David also rejoiced greatly.

David's Praise to God

10Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said:

"Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel,
our Father, forever and ever.
11 Yours, O LORD, *is* the greatness,
The power and the glory,
The victory and the majesty;
For all *that is* in heaven and in earth
is Yours;
Yours *is* the kingdom, O LORD,
And You are exalted as head over all.
12 Both riches and honor *come* from You,
And You reign over all.
In Your hand *is* power and might;
In Your hand *it is* to make great
And to give strength to all.

29:1 [a]Literally *palace* **29:8** [a]Possibly the same as *Jehieli* (compare 26:21, 22)

13 "Now therefore, our God,
We thank You
And praise Your glorious name.
14 But who *am* I, and who *are* my people,
That we should be able to offer so
willingly as this?
For all things *come* from You,
And of Your own we have given You.
15 For we *are* aliens and pilgrims
before You,
As *were* all our fathers;
Our days on earth *are* as a shadow,
And without hope.

16 "O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and *is* all Your own. 17 I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these *things;* and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You. 18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You. 19 And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all *these things,* and to build the temple[a] for which I have made provision."

20 Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the LORD your God." So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.

Solomon Anointed King

21 And they made sacrifices to the LORD and offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the next day: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. 22 So they ate and drank before the LORD with great gladness on that day. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed *him* before the LORD *to be* the leader, and Zadok *to be* priest. 23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. 24 All the leaders and the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David, submitted themselves to King Solomon. 25 So the LORD exalted Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him *such* royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

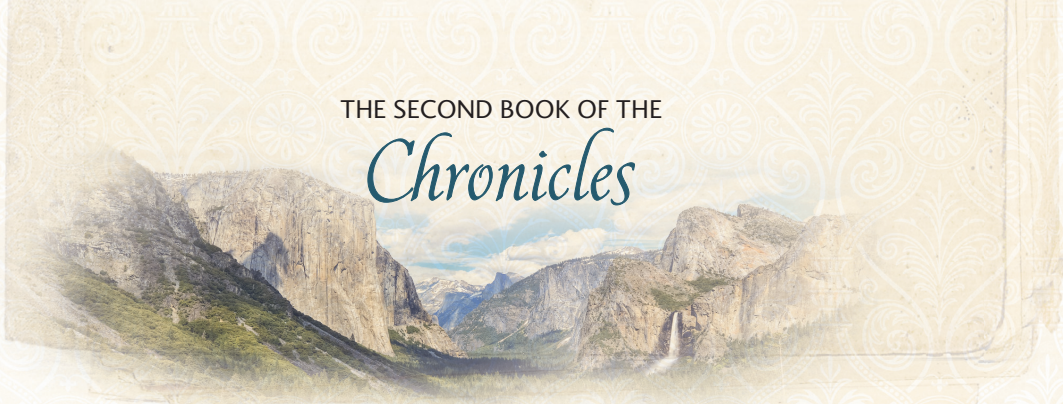
The Close of David's Reign

26 Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27 And the period that he reigned over Israel *was* forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and thirty-three *years* he reigned in Jerusalem. 28 So he died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place. 29 Now the acts of King David, first and last, indeed they *are* written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, 30 with all his reign and his might, and the events that happened to him, to Israel, and to all the kingdoms of the lands.

29:19 [a] Literally *palace*

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE

Chronicles



Solomon Requests Wisdom

1 Now Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God *was* with him and exalted him exceedingly.

2And Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' *houses.* 3Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon; for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. 4But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to *the place* David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. 5Now the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put[a] before the tabernacle of the LORD; Solomon and the assembly sought Him *there.* 6And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

7On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

8And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. 9Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. 10Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"

11Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king— 12wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who *were* before you, nor shall any after you have the like."

Solomon's Military and Economic Power

13So Solomon came to Jerusalem from the high place that *was* at Gibeon, from before the tabernacle of meeting, and reigned over Israel. 14And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. 15Also the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland. 16And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current* price. 17They also acquired and imported from Egypt a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for one hundred and fifty; thus, through their agents,[a] they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

Solomon Prepares to Build the Temple

2 Then Solomon determined to build a temple for the name of the LORD, and a royal house for himself. 2Solomon selected seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry *stone* in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.

3Then Solomon sent to Hiram[a] king of Tyre, saying:

1:5 [a]Some authorities read *it was there.* **1:17** [a]Literally *by their hands* **2:3** [a]Hebrew *Huram* (compare 1 Kings 5:1)

As you have dealt with David my father,
and sent him cedars to build himself
a house to dwell in, *so deal with me.*
4Behold, I am building a temple for the
name of the LORD my God, to dedicate
it to Him, to burn before Him sweet
incense, for the continual showbread,
for the burnt offerings morning and
evening, on the Sabbaths, on the New
Moons, and on the set feasts of the
LORD our God. This *is an ordinance*
forever to Israel.

5 And the temple which I build *will be*
great, for our God is greater than all
gods. 6But who is able to build Him a
temple, since heaven and the heaven of
heavens cannot contain Him? Who *am* I
then, that I should build Him a temple,
except to burn sacrifice before Him?

7 Therefore send me at once a man skill-
ful to work in gold and silver, in bronze
and iron, in purple and crimson and
blue, who has skill to engrave with the
skillful men who are with me in Judah
and Jerusalem, whom David my father
provided. 8Also send me cedar and
cypress and algum logs from Lebanon,
for I know that your servants have skill
to cut timber in Lebanon; and indeed
my servants *will be* with your servants,
9to prepare timber for me in abun-
dance, for the temple which I am about
to build *shall be* great and wonderful.

10 And indeed I will give to your ser-
vants, the woodsmen who cut timber,
twenty thousand kors of ground wheat,
twenty thousand kors of barley, twenty
thousand baths of wine, and twenty
thousand baths of oil.

11Then Hiram king of Tyre answered in
writing, which he sent to Solomon:

Because the LORD loves His people, He
has made you king over them.

12Hiram[a] also said:

Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who
made heaven and earth, for He has
given King David a wise son, endowed
with prudence and understanding,
who will build a temple for the LORD
and a royal house for himself!

13 And now I have sent a skillful man,
endowed with understanding, Huram[a]
my master[b] *craftsman* 14(the son of a
woman of the daughters of Dan, and
his father was a man of Tyre), skilled
to work in gold and silver, bronze and
iron, stone and wood, purple and blue,
fine linen and crimson, and to make any
engraving and to accomplish any plan
which may be given to him, with your
skillful men and with the skillful men of
my lord David your father.

15 Now therefore, the wheat, the barley,
the oil, and the wine which my lord
has spoken of, let him send to his
servants. 16And we will cut wood from
Lebanon, as much as you need; we will
bring it to you in rafts by sea to Joppa,
and you will carry it up to Jerusalem.

17Then Solomon numbered all the
aliens who *were* in the land of Israel, after
the census in which David his father had
numbered them; and there were found to
be one hundred and fifty-three thousand
six hundred. 18And he made seventy thou-
sand of them bearers of burdens, eighty
thousand stonecutters in the mountain,
and three thousand six hundred overseers
to make the people work.

Solomon Builds the Temple

3 Now Solomon began to build the house
of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount
Moriah, where *the LORD*[a] had appeared to
his father David, at the place that David
had prepared on the threshing floor of
Ornan[b] the Jebusite. 2And he began to
build on the second *day* of the second
month in the fourth year of his reign.

3This is the foundation which Solomon
laid for building the house of God: The
length *was* sixty cubits (by cubits according
to the former measure) and the width twenty
cubits. 4And the vestibule that *was* in front *of*

2:12 [a]Hebrew *Huram* (compare 1 Kings 5:1) **2:13** [a]Spelled *Hiram* in 1 Kings 7:13 [b]Literally *father* (compare 1 Kings 7:13, 14) **3:1** [a]Literally *He,* following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the LORD;* Targum reads *the Angel of the LORD.* [b]Spelled *Araunah* in 2 Samuel 24:16ff

the sanctuary[a] was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the height *was* one hundred and[b] twenty. He overlaid the inside with pure gold. [5]The larger room[a] he paneled with cypress which he overlaid with fine gold, and he carved palm trees and chainwork on it. [6]And he decorated the house with precious stones for beauty, and the gold *was* gold from Parvaim. [7]He also overlaid the house—the beams and doorposts, its walls and doors—with gold; and he carved cherubim on the walls.

[8]And he made the Most Holy Place. Its length was according to the width of the house, twenty cubits, and its width twenty cubits. He overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold. [9]The weight of the nails *was* fifty shekels of gold; and he overlaid the upper area with gold. [10]In the Most Holy Place he made two cherubim, fashioned by carving, and overlaid them with gold. [11]The wings of the cherubim *were* twenty cubits in *overall* length: one wing *of the one cherub was* five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub; [12]*one* wing of the other cherub *was* five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *also was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub. [13]The wings of these cherubim spanned twenty cubits overall. They stood on their feet, and they faced inward. [14]And he made the veil of blue, purple, crimson, and fine linen, and wove cherubim into it.

[15]Also he made in front of the temple[a] two pillars thirty-five[b] cubits high, and the capital that *was* on the top of each of *them* was five cubits. [16]He made wreaths of chainwork, as in the inner sanctuary, and put *them* on top of the pillars; and he made one hundred pomegranates, and put *them* on the wreaths of chainwork. [17]Then he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand and the other on the left; he called the name of the one on the right hand Jachin, and the name of the one on the left Boaz.

Furnishings of the Temple

4 Moreover he made a bronze altar: twenty cubits was its length, twenty cubits its width, and ten cubits its height.

[2]Then he made the Sea of cast *bronze,* ten cubits from one brim to the other; *it was* completely round. Its height *was* five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. [3]And under it *was* the likeness of oxen encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The oxen *were* cast in two rows, when it was cast. [4]It stood on twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea *was set* upon them, and all their back parts *pointed* inward. [5]It *was* a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It contained three thousand[a] baths.

[6]He also made ten lavers, and put five on the right side and five on the left, to wash in them; such things as they offered for the burnt offering they would wash in them, but the Sea *was* for the priests to wash in. [7]And he made ten lampstands of gold according to their design, and set *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. [8]He also made ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. And he made one hundred bowls of gold.

[9]Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court and doors for the court; and he overlaid these doors with bronze. [10]He set the Sea on the right side, toward the southeast.

[11]Then Huram made the pots and the shovels and the bowls. So Huram finished doing the work that he was to do for King Solomon for the house of God: [12]the two pillars and the bowl-shaped capitals *that were* on top of the two pillars; the two networks covering the two bowl-shaped capitals which *were* on top of the pillars; [13]four hundred pomegranates for the two networks (two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on the pillars); [14]he also made carts and the lavers on the carts; [15]one Sea and twelve oxen under it; [16]also the pots, the shovels, the forks—and all their articles Huram his master[a] *craftsman* made of burnished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the LORD.

3:4 [a]The main room of the temple; elsewhere called the holy place (compare 1 Kings 6:3) [b]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Arabic, some manuscripts of the Septuagint, and Syriac omit *one hundred and.* **3:5** [a]Literally *house* **3:15** [a]Literally *house* [b]Or *eighteen* (compare 1 Kings 7:15; 2 Kings 25:17; and Jeremiah 52:21) **4:5** [a]Or *two thousand* (compare 1 Kings 7:26) **4:16** [a]Literally *father*

[17]In the plain of Jordan the king had them cast in clay molds, between Succoth and Zeredah.[a] [18]And Solomon had all these articles made in such great abundance that the weight of the bronze was not determined.

[19]Thus Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of God: the altar of gold and the tables on which *was* the showbread; [20]the lampstands with their lamps of pure gold, to burn in the prescribed manner in front of the inner sanctuary, [21]with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold, of purest gold; [22]the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold. As for the entry of the sanctuary, its inner doors to the Most Holy *Place,* and the doors of the main hall of the temple, *were* gold.

5 So all the work that Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and all the furnishings. And he put *them* in the treasuries of the house of God.

The Ark Brought into the Temple

[2]Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD up from the City of David, which *is* Zion. [3]Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with the king at the feast, which *was* in the seventh month. [4]So all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. [5]Then they brought up the ark, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that *were* in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. [6]Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him before the ark, were sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. [7]Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple,[a] to the Most Holy *Place,* under the wings of the cherubim. [8]For the cherubim spread *their* wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. [9]The poles extended so that the ends of the poles of the ark could be seen from *the holy place,* in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day.

> *Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud.*
>
> 2 CHRONICLES 5:13

[10]Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put *there* at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they had come out of Egypt.

[11]And it came to pass when the priests came out of the *Most* Holy *Place* (for all the priests who *were* present had sanctified themselves, without keeping to their divisions), [12]and the Levites *who were* the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets— [13]indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying:*

"*For He is* good,

For His mercy *endures* forever,"[a]

that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, [14]so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

6 Then Solomon spoke:

"The LORD said He would dwell in the
dark cloud.
2 I have surely built You an exalted house,
And a place for You to dwell in forever."

4:17 [a]Spelled *Zaretan* in 1 Kings 7:46 **5:7** [a]Literally *house*
5:13 [a]Compare Psalm 106:1

Solomon's Speech upon Completion of the Work

3Then the king turned around and
blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while
all the assembly of Israel was standing. 4And
he said: "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel,
who has fulfilled with His hands *what* He
spoke with His mouth to my father David,
saying, 5'Since the day that I brought My
people out of the land of Egypt, I have
chosen no city from any tribe of Israel *in
which* to build a house, that My name might
be there, nor did I choose any man to be
a ruler over My people Israel. 6Yet I have
chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be
there, and I have chosen David to be over
My people Israel.' 7Now it was in the heart
of my father David to build a temple[a] for
the name of the LORD God of Israel. 8But
the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas
it was in your heart to build a temple for
My name, you did well in that it was in your
heart. 9Nevertheless you shall not build the
temple, but your son who will come from
your body, he shall build the temple for
My name.' 10So the LORD has fulfilled His
word which He spoke, and I have filled the
position of my father David, and sit on the
throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and
I have built the temple for the name of the
LORD God of Israel. 11And there I have put
the ark, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD
which He made with the children of Israel."

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

12Then *Solomon*[a] stood before the altar
of the LORD in the presence of all the
assembly of Israel, and spread out his
hands 13(for Solomon had made a bronze
platform five cubits long, five cubits wide,
and three cubits high, and had set it in the
midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt
down on his knees before all the assem-
bly of Israel, and spread out his hands
toward heaven); 14and he said: "LORD God
of Israel, *there is* no God in heaven or on
earth like You, who keep *Your* covenant and
mercy with Your servants who walk before
You with all their hearts. 15You have kept
what You promised Your servant David my
father; You have both spoken with Your
mouth and fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it
is* this day. 16Therefore, LORD God of Israel,
now keep what You promised Your servant
David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail
to have a man sit before Me on the throne
of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their
way, that they walk in My law as you have
walked before Me.' 17And now, O LORD God
of Israel, let Your word come true, which
You have spoken to Your servant David.

18"But will God indeed dwell with men
on the earth? Behold, heaven and the
heaven of heavens cannot contain You.
How much less this temple[a] which I have
built! 19Yet regard the prayer of Your ser-
vant and his supplication, O LORD my God,
and listen to the cry and the prayer which
Your servant is praying before You: 20that
Your eyes may be open toward this temple
day and night, toward the place where *You*
said *You would* put Your name, that You may
hear the prayer which Your servant makes
toward this place. 21And may You hear the
supplications of Your servant and of Your
people Israel, when they pray toward this
place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling
place, and when You hear, forgive.

22"If anyone sins against his neighbor,
and is forced to take an oath, and comes *and*
takes an oath before Your altar in this tem-
ple, 23then hear from heaven, and act, and
judge Your servants, bringing retribution
on the wicked by bringing his way on his
own head, and justifying the righteous by
giving him according to his righteousness.

24"Or if Your people Israel are defeated
before an enemy because they have sinned
against You, and return and confess Your
name, and pray and make supplication
before You in this temple, 25then hear from
heaven and forgive the sin of Your people
Israel, and bring them back to the land
which You gave to them and their fathers.

26"When the heavens are shut up and
there is no rain because they have sinned
against You, when they pray toward this place
and confess Your name, and turn from their
sin because You afflict them, 27then hear *in*
heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants,
Your people Israel, that You may teach them
the good way in which they should walk; and
send rain on Your land which You have given
to Your people as an inheritance.

28"When there is famine in the land,
pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or
grasshoppers; when their enemies besiege
them in the land of their cities; what-
ever plague or whatever sickness *there is;*

6:7 [a]Literally *house*, and so in verses 8–10 **6:12** [a]Literally *he* (compare 1 Kings 8:22) **6:18** [a]Literally *house*

29whatever prayer, whatever supplication is *made* by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows his own burden and his own grief, and spreads out his hands to this temple: 30then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of the sons of men), 31that they may fear You, to walk in Your ways as long as they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

32"Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for the sake of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray in this temple; 33then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as *do* Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.

34"When Your people go out to battle against their enemies, wherever You send them, and when they pray to You toward this city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, 35then hear from heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

36"When they sin against You (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to a land far or near; 37*yet* when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong, and have committed wickedness'; 38and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and toward the temple which I have built for Your name: 39then hear from heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You. 40Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and *let* Your ears *be* attentive to the prayer *made* in this place.

And the priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the LORD, which King David had made to praise the LORD, saying, "For His mercy endures forever," whenever David offered praise by their ministry. The priests sounded trumpets opposite them, while all Israel stood.

2 CHRONICLES 7:6

41 "Now therefore,
Arise, O LORD God, to Your resting place,
You and the ark of Your strength.
Let Your priests, O LORD God,
be clothed with salvation,
And let Your saints rejoice in goodness.

42 "O LORD God, do not turn away the
face of Your Anointed;
Remember the mercies of Your
servant David."[a]

Solomon Dedicates the Temple

7 When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.[a] 2And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. 3When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, *saying:*

"For *He is* good,
For His mercy *endures* forever."[a]

4Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. 5King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. 6And the priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the LORD, which King David had

6:42 [a]Compare Psalm 132:8–10 **7:1** [a]Literally *house*
7:3 [a]Compare Psalm 106:1

made to praise the LORD, saying, "For His mercy *endures* forever,"[a] whenever David offered praise by their ministry. The priests sounded trumpets opposite them, while all Israel stood.

7 Furthermore Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that *was* in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat.

8 At that time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt.[a] 9 And on the eighth day they held a sacred assembly, for they observed the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. 10 On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the good that the LORD had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel. 11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house; and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the LORD and in his own house.

God's Second Appearance to Solomon

12 Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15 Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer *made* in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 17 As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 18 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail *to have* a man as ruler in Israel.'

19 "But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, 20 then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

21 "And *as for* this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and this house?' 22 Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.'"

Solomon's Additional Achievements

8 It came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his own house, 2 that the cities which Hiram[a] had given to Solomon, Solomon built them; and he settled the children of Israel there. 3 And Solomon went to Hamath Zobah and seized it. 4 He also built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the storage cities which he built in Hamath. 5 He built Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon, fortified cities *with* walls, gates, and bars, 6 also Baalath and all the storage cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities and the cities of the cavalry, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

7 All the people *who were* left of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who *were* not of Israel— 8 that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel did not destroy—from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day. 9 But Solomon did not make the children of Israel servants for his work. Some *were* men of war, captains of his officers, captains of his chariots, and his cavalry. 10 And others *were* chiefs of the

7:6 [a]Compare Psalm 106:1 **7:8** [a]That is, the Shihor (compare 1 Chronicles 13:5) **8:2** [a]Hebrew *Huram* (compare 2 Chronicles 2:3)

officials of King Solomon: two hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people.

11 Now Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the house he had built for her, for he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because *the places* to which the ark of the LORD has come are holy."

12 Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the LORD which he had built before the vestibule, 13 according to the daily rate, offering according to the commandment of Moses, for the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the three appointed yearly feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. 14 And, according to the order of David his father, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, the Levites for their duties (to praise and serve before the priests) as the duty of each day required, and the gatekeepers by their divisions at each gate; for so David the man of God had commanded. 15 They did not depart from the command of the king to the priests and Levites concerning any matter or concerning the treasuries.

16 Now all the work of Solomon was well-ordered from[a] the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was completed.

17 Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and Elath[a] on the seacoast, in the land of Edom. 18 And Hiram sent him ships by the hand of his servants, and servants who knew the sea. They went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and fifty talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba's Praise of Solomon

9 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions, *having* a very great retinue, camels that bore spices, gold in abundance, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. 2 So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for Solomon that he could not explain it to her. 3 And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 4 the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers and their apparel, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.

5 Then she said to the king: "*It was* a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 6 However I did not believe their words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me. You exceed the fame of which I heard. 7 Happy *are* your men and happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! 8 Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on His throne *to be* king for the LORD your God! Because your God has loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness."

9 And she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones; there never were any spices such as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

10 Also, the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon, who brought gold from Ophir, brought algum[a] wood and precious stones. 11 And the king made walkways *of* the algum[a] wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers; and there were none such *as these* seen before in the land of Judah.

12 Now King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, *much more* than she had brought to the king. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

Solomon's Great Wealth

13 The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, 14 besides *what* the traveling merchants and traders brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon. 15 And King Solomon made two

8:16 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *as far as*. **8:17** [a]Hebrew *Eloth* (compare 2 Kings 14:22) **9:10** [a]Or *almug* (compare 1 Kings 10:11, 12) **9:11** [a]Or *almug* (compare 1 Kings 10:11, 12)

hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred *shekels* of hammered gold went into each shield. [16]*He* also *made* three hundred shields of hammered gold; three hundred *shekels*[a] of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

[17]Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. [18]The throne *had* six steps, with a footstool of gold, *which were* fastened to the throne; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. [19]Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like *this* had been made for any *other* kingdom.

[20]All King Solomon's drinking vessels *were* gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon *were* pure gold. Not *one was* silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. [21]For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram.[a] Once every three years the merchant ships[b] came, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.[c]

[22]So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. [23]And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. [24]Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year.

[25]Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem.

[26]So he reigned over all the kings from the River[a] to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. [27]The king made silver *as common* in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland. [28]And they brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all lands.

Death of Solomon

[29]Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? [30]Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. [31]Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

The Revolt Against Rehoboam

10 And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. [2]So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *it* (he was in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon), that Jeroboam returned from Egypt. [3]Then they sent for him and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, [4]"Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you."

[5]So he said to them, "Come back to me after three days." And the people departed.

[6]Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, "How do you advise *me* to answer these people?"

[7]And they spoke to him, saying, "If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever."

9:16 [a]Or *three minas* (compare 1 Kings 10:17) **9:21** [a]Hebrew *Huram* (compare 1 Kings 10:22) [b]Literally *ships of Tarshish* (deep-sea vessels) [c]Or *peacocks* **9:26** [a]That is, the Euphrates



[8]But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. [9]And he said to them, "What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us'?"

[10]Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you should speak to the people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us'—thus you shall say to them: 'My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's waist! [11]And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scourges!'"[a]

[12]So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me the third day." [13]Then the king answered them roughly. King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders, [14]and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father[a] made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scourges!"[b] [15]So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn *of events* was from God, that the LORD might fulfill His word, which He had spoken by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

[16]Now when all Israel *saw* that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying:

"What share have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son
of Jesse.
Every man to your tents, O Israel!
Now see to your own house, O David!"

So all Israel departed to their tents. [17]But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.

[18]Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who *was* in charge of revenue; but the children of Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted *his* chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. [19]So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

11 Now when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled from the house of Judah and Benjamin one hundred and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.

[2]But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, [3]"Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, [4]'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up or fight against your brethren! Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me." '" Therefore they obeyed the words of the LORD, and turned back from attacking Jeroboam.

Rehoboam Fortifies the Cities

[5]So Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. [6]And he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, [7]Beth Zur, Sochoh, Adullam, [8]Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, [9]Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, [10]Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, fortified cities. [11]And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. [12]Also in every city *he put* shields and spears, and made them very strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

Priests and Levites Move to Judah

[13]And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who *were* in all Israel took their stand with him. [14]For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the LORD. [15]Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made. [16]And after *the Levites left,*[a] those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers. [17]So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong

10:11 [a]Literally *scorpions* **10:14** [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate (compare verse 10 and 1 Kings 12:14); Masoretic Text reads *I.* [b]Literally *scorpions* **11:16** [a]Literally *after them*

for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.

The Family of Rehoboam

[18]Then Rehoboam took for himself as wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, *and of* Abihail the daughter of Eliah the son of Jesse. [19]And she bore him children: Jeush, Shamariah, and Zaham. [20]After her he took Maachah the granddaughter[a] of Absalom; and she bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. [21]Now Rehoboam loved Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom more than all his wives and his concubines; for he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and begot twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. [22]And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maachah as chief, *to be* leader among his brothers; for he *intended* to make him king. [23]He dealt wisely, and dispersed some of his sons throughout all the territories of Judah and Benjamin, to every fortified city; and he gave them provisions in abundance. He also sought many wives *for them.*

Egypt Attacks Judah

12 Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel along with him. [2]And it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, [3]with twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number who came with him out of Egypt—the Lubim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians. [4]And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem.

[5]Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus says the LORD: 'You have forsaken Me, and therefore I also have left you in the hand of Shishak.'"

[6]So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, "The LORD *is* righteous."

[7]Now when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled themselves; *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance. My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. [8]Nevertheless they will be his servants, that they may distinguish My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations."

[9]So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took everything. He also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made. [10]Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed *them* to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house. [11]And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guard would go and bring them out; then they would take them back into the guardroom. [12]When he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, so as not to destroy *him* completely; and things also went well in Judah.

The End of Rehoboam's Reign

[13]Thus King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he became king; and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess. [14]And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.

[15]The acts of Rehoboam, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And *there were* wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. [16]So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. Then Abijah[a] his son reigned in his place.

Abijah Reigns in Judah

13 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah. [2]He reigned three years in

11:20 [a]Literally *daughter,* but in the broader sense of granddaughter (compare 2 Chronicles 13:2) **12:16** [a]Spelled *Abijam* in 1 Kings 14:31

Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Michaiah[a] the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.

And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. [3]Abijah set the battle in order with an army of valiant warriors, four hundred thousand choice men. Jeroboam also drew up in battle formation against him with eight hundred thousand choice men, mighty men of valor.

[4]Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, and said, "Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel: [5]Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt? [6]Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. [7]Then worthless rogues gathered to him, and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them. [8]And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hand of the sons of David; and you *are* a great multitude, and with you are the gold calves which Jeroboam made for you as gods. [9]Have you not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made for yourselves priests, like the peoples of *other* lands, so that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may be a priest of *things that are* not gods? [10]But as for us, the LORD *is* our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the priests who minister to the LORD *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Levites *attend* to *their* duties. [11]And they burn to the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense; *they* also *set* the showbread *in order on* the pure *gold* table, and the lampstand of gold with its lamps to burn every evening; for we keep the command of the LORD our God, but you have forsaken Him. [12]Now look, God Himself is with us as *our* head, and His priests with sounding trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!"

[13]But Jeroboam caused an ambush to go around behind them; so they were in front of Judah, and the ambush *was* behind them. [14]And when Judah looked around, to their surprise the battle line *was* at both front and rear; and they cried out to the LORD, and the priests sounded the trumpets. [15]Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. [16]And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hand. [17]Then Abijah and his people struck them with a great slaughter; so five hundred thousand choice men of Israel fell slain. [18]Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers.

[19]And Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took cities from him: Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and Ephrain[a] with its villages. [20]So Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck him, and he died.

[21]But Abijah grew mighty, married fourteen wives, and begot twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. [22]Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, his ways, and his sayings *are* written in the annals of the prophet Iddo.

14 So Abijah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place. In his days the land was quiet for ten years.

Asa Reigns in Judah

[2]Asa did *what was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God, [3]for he removed the altars of the foreign *gods* and the high places, and broke down the *sacred* pillars and cut down the wooden images. [4]He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment. [5]He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him. [6]And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; he had no war in those years, because the LORD had given him rest. [7]Therefore he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and make walls around *them,* and towers, gates, and bars, *while* the land *is* yet before us, because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought *Him,* and He has given us rest on every side." So they

13:2 [a]Spelled *Maachah* in 11:20, 21 and 1 Kings 15:2 **13:19** [a]Or *Ephron*

The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.
2 CHRONICLES 16:9

So often I bewilder myself. I can't sort out my own deep desires or truly come to grips with my motives. I feel guilty when I shouldn't and self-assured when I should be embarrassed. I am arrogant when I should be humbled and cower with apprehension when I should be confident in the power of the Lord. What wonderful discovery that the God who loves me enough to die to take my rap knows me when I don't know myself, knows me through and through. He knows my heart and always perceives when evil has entered me or when my motives are pure. He "shows Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" even when we can't understand our complicated selves. We can cling to Him, and He will be strong and right and brave and good *for* us.



built and prospered. 8And Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah who carried shields and spears, and from Benjamin two hundred and eighty thousand men who carried shields and drew bows; all these *were* mighty men of valor.

9Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. 10So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11And Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, *it is* nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You *are* our God; do not let man prevail against You!"

12So the LORD struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 13And Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them to Gerar. So the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover, for they were broken before the LORD and His army. And they carried away very much spoil. 14Then they defeated all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the LORD came upon them; and they plundered all the cities, for there was exceedingly much spoil in them. 15They also attacked the livestock enclosures, and carried off sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

The Reforms of Asa

15 Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. 2And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. 3For a long time Israel *has been* without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; 4but when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them. 5And in those times *there was* no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil *was* on all the inhabitants of the lands. 6So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled

them with every adversity. 7But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!"

8And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded[a] the prophet, he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the LORD that *was* before the vestibule of the LORD. 9Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.

10So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. 12Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; 13and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. 14Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns. 15And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.

16Also he removed Maachah, the mother of Asa the king, from *being* queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah;[a] and Asa cut down her obscene image, then crushed and burned *it* by the Brook Kidron. 17But the high places were not removed from Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days.

18He also brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated and that he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils. 19And there was no war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa.

Asa's Treaty with Syria

16 In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 2Then Asa brought silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-Hadad king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, 3"*Let there be* a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you silver and gold; come, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me."

4So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and all the storage cities of Naphtali. 5Now it happened, when Baasha heard *it,* that he stopped building Ramah and ceased his work. 6Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.

Hanani's Message to Asa

7And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. 8Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. 9For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars." 10Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for *he was* enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed *some* of the people at that time.

Illness and Death of Asa

11Note that the acts of Asa, first and last, are indeed written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 12And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians.

15:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Septuagint; Syriac and Vulgate read *Azariah the son of Oded* (compare verse 1). **15:16** [a]A Canaanite deity

13So Asa rested with his fathers; he died
in the forty-first year of his reign. 14They
buried him in his own tomb, which he
had made for himself in the City of David;
and they laid him in the bed which was
filled with spices and various ingredients
prepared in a mixture of ointments. They
made a very great burning for him.

Jehoshaphat Reigns in Judah

17 Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned
in his place, and strengthened him-
self against Israel. 2And he placed troops
in all the fortified cities of Judah, and
set garrisons in the land of Judah and
in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his
father had taken. 3Now the LORD was with
Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the
former ways of his father David; he did
not seek the Baals, 4but sought the God[a]
of his father, and walked in His command-
ments and not according to the acts of
Israel. 5Therefore the LORD established
the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah
gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had
riches and honor in abundance. 6And his
heart took delight in the ways of the LORD;
moreover he removed the high places and
wooden images from Judah.

7Also in the third year of his reign he sent
his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah,
Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cit-
ies of Judah. 8And with them *he sent* Levites:
Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel,
Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobi-
jah, and Tobadonijah—the Levites; and
with them Elishama and Jehoram, the
priests. 9So they taught in Judah, and *had*
the Book of the Law of the LORD with them;
they went throughout all the cities of Judah
and taught the people.

10And the fear of the LORD fell on all the
kingdoms of the lands that *were* around
Judah, so that they did not make war
against Jehoshaphat. 11Also *some* of the
Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents
and silver as tribute; and the Arabians
brought him flocks, seven thousand seven
hundred rams and seven thousand seven
hundred male goats.

12So Jehoshaphat became increasingly
powerful, and he built fortresses and stor-
age cities in Judah. 13He had much property
in the cities of Judah; and the men of war,
mighty men of valor, *were* in Jerusalem.

14These *are* their numbers, accord-
ing to their fathers' houses. Of Judah, the
captains of thousands: Adnah the captain,
and with him three hundred thousand
mighty men of valor; 15and next to him
was Jehohanan the captain, and with
him two hundred and eighty thousand;
16and next to him *was* Amasiah the son of
Zichri, who willingly offered himself to
the LORD, and with him two hundred thou-
sand mighty men of valor. 17Of Benjamin:
Eliada a mighty man of valor, and with
him two hundred thousand men armed
with bow and shield; 18and next to him *was*
Jehozabad, and with him one hundred and
eighty thousand prepared for war. 19These
served the king, besides those the king put
in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

Micaiah Warns Ahab

18 Jehoshaphat had riches and honor
in abundance; and by marriage he
allied himself with Ahab. 2After some years
he went down to *visit* Ahab in Samaria; and
Ahab killed sheep and oxen in abundance
for him and the people who were with
him, and persuaded him to go up *with him*
to Ramoth Gilead. 3So Ahab king of Israel
said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will
you go with me *against* Ramoth Gilead?"

And he answered him, "I *am* as you *are,*
and my people as your people; *we will be*
with you in the war."

4Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of
Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the
LORD today."

5Then the king of Israel gathered the
prophets together, four hundred men, and
said to them, "Shall we go to war against
Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

So they said, "Go up, for God will
deliver it into the king's hand."

6But Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not still
a prophet of the LORD here, that we may
inquire of Him?"[a]

7So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat,
"*There is* still one man by whom we may
inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because
he never prophesies good concerning me,
but always evil. He *is* Micaiah the son of Imla."

17:4 [a]Septuagint reads *LORD God.* **18:6** [a]Or *him*

And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!"

[8]Then the king of Israel called one *of his* officers and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imla quickly!"

[9]The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, clothed in *their* robes, sat each on his throne; and they sat at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. [10]Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'"

[11]And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the king's hand."

[12]Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Therefore please let your word be like *the word of* one of them, and speak encouragement."

[13]And Micaiah said, "*As* the LORD lives, whatever my God says, that I will speak."

[14]Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

And he said, "Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!"

[15]So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

[16]Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'"

[17]And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

[18]Then *Micaiah* said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left. [19]And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab king of Israel to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. [20]Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' [21]So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And *the LORD* said, 'You shall persuade *him* and also prevail; go out and do so.' [22]Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

[23]Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?"

[24]And Micaiah said, "Indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!"

[25]Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; [26]and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this *fellow* in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I return in peace." '"

[27]But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

Ahab Dies in Battle

[28]So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. [29]And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

[30]Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots who *were* with him, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel."

[31]So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It *is* the king of Israel!" Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him. [32]For so it was, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. [33]Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of

the battle, for I am wounded." 34The battle increased that day, and the king of Israel propped *himself* up in *his* chariot facing the Syrians until evening; and about the time of sunset he died.

19 Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. 2And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD *is* upon you. 3Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God."

The Reforms of Jehoshaphat

4So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers. 5Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, 6and said to the judges, "Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment. 7Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do *it,* for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes."

8Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, when they returned to Jerusalem.[a] 9And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart: 10Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the LORD and wrath come upon you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty. 11And take notice: Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters; also the Levites *will be* officials before you. Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good."

Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir Defeated

20 It happened after this *that* the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and *others* with them besides the Ammonites,[a] came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria;[a] and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which *is* En Gedi). 3And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4So Judah gathered together to ask *help* from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

5Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, 6and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, *are* You not God in heaven, and do You *not* rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand *is there not* power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? 7*Are* You not our God, *who* drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 8And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name *is* in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' 10And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them— 11here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. 12O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes *are* upon You."

15Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.

14Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon

19:8 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*
20:1 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Meunites* (compare 26:7). **20:2** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Old Latin read *Edom.*

Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God's. 16Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. 17You will not *need* to fight in this *battle.* Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD *is* with you."

18And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. 19Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever."

2 CHRONICLES 20:21

20So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." 21And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

"Praise the LORD,
For His mercy *endures* forever."[a]

22Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy *them.* And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.

2 CHRONICLES 20:22

24So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there *were* their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

25When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies,[a] and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah[a] until this day. 27Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. 28So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. 29And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries when they heard that the LORD

20:21 [a]Compare Psalm 106:1 **20:25** [a]A few Hebrew manuscripts, Old Latin, and Vulgate read *garments;* Septuagint reads *armor.*
20:26 [a]Literally *Blessing*

had fought against the enemies of Israel. 30Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

The End of Jehoshaphat's Reign

31So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. *He was* thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 32And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing *what was* right in the sight of the LORD. 33Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their fathers.

34Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they *are* written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, which *is* mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

35After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. 36And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. 37But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

Jehoram Reigns in Judah

21 And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place. 2He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these *were* the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. 3Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he *was* the firstborn.

4Now when Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also *others* of the princes of Israel.

5Jehoram *was* thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 7Yet the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.

8In his days Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. 9So Jehoram went out with his officers, and all his chariots with him. And he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots. 10Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. At that time Libnah revolted against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. 11Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah astray.

12And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying,

> Thus says the LORD God of your father David:
> Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot like the harlotry of the house of Ahab, and also have killed your brothers, those of your father's household, *who were* better than yourself, 14behold, the LORD will strike your people with a serious affliction—your children, your wives, and all your possessions; 15and you *will become* very sick with a disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day.

16Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who *were* near the Ethiopians. 17And they came up into Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house, and also his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz,[a] the youngest of his sons.

18After all this the LORD struck him in his

21:17 [a]Elsewhere called *Ahaziah* (compare 2 Chronicles 22:1)

intestines with an incurable disease. [19]Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning for his fathers.

[20]He was thirty-two years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eight years and, to no one's sorrow, departed. However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Ahaziah Reigns in Judah

22 Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place, for the raiders who came with the Arabians into the camp had killed all the older *sons*. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned. [2]Ahaziah *was* forty-two[a] years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri. [3]He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly. [4]Therefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction. [5]He also followed their advice, and went with Jehoram[a] the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. [6]Then he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah[a] the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

[7]His going to Joram was God's occasion for Ahaziah's downfall; for when he arrived, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. [8]And it happened, when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who served Ahaziah, that he killed them. [9]Then he searched for Ahaziah; and they caught him (he was hiding in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu. When they had killed him, they buried him, "because," they said, "he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart."

So the house of Ahaziah had no one to assume power over the kingdom.

Athaliah Reigns in Judah

[10]Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs of the house of Judah. [11]But Jehoshabeath,[a] the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered, and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she did not kill him. [12]And he was hidden with them in the house of God for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

Joash Crowned King of Judah

23 In the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, *and made a* covenant with the captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri. [2]And they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the chief fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

[3]Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said to them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has said of the sons of David. [4]This *is* what you shall do: One-third of you entering on the Sabbath, of the priests and the Levites, *shall be* keeping watch over the doors; [5]one-third *shall be* at the king's house; and one-third at the Gate of the Foundation. All the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD. [6]But let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and those of the Levites who serve. They may go in, for they *are* holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. [7]And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and

22:2 [a]Or *twenty-two* (compare 2 Kings 8:26) **22:5** [a]Also spelled *Joram* (compare verses 5 and 7; 2 Kings 8:28; and elsewhere) **22:6** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and 2 Kings 8:29 read *Ahaziah*. **22:11** [a]Spelled *Jehosheba* in 2 Kings 11:2

whoever comes into the house, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out."

[8]So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going *off duty* on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed the divisions. [9]And Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which *had belonged* to King David, that *were* in the temple of God. [10]Then he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and by the temple, all around the king. [11]And they brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, *gave him* the Testimony,[a] and made him king. Then Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, "*Long* live the king!"

When she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, also the singers with musical instruments, and those who led in praise.

2 CHRONICLES 23:13

Death of Athaliah

[12]Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people *in* the temple of the LORD. [13]*When* she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance; and the leaders and the trumpeters *were* by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, also the singers with musical instruments, and those who led in praise. So Athaliah tore her clothes and said, "Treason! Treason!"

[14]And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were set over the army, and said to them, "Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not kill her in the house of the LORD."

[15]So they seized her; and she went by way of the entrance of the Horse Gate *into* the king's house, and they killed her there.

Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the LORD to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was established by David.

2 CHRONICLES 23:18

[16]Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the people, and the king, that they should be the LORD's people. [17]And all the people went to the temple[a] of Baal, and tore it down. They broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. [18]Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the LORD to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was established* by David. [19]And he set the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one *who was* in any way unclean should enter.

[20]Then he took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD; and they went through the Upper Gate to the king's house, and set the king on the throne of the kingdom. [21]So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

Joash Repairs the Temple

24 Joash *was* seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was*

23:11 [a]That is, the Law (compare Exodus 25:16, 21; 31:18)
23:17 [a]Literally *house*

Zibiah of Beersheba. 2Joash did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. 3And Jehoiada took two wives for him, and he had sons and daughters.

4Now it happened after this *that* Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the LORD. 5Then he gathered the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that you do it quickly."

However the Levites did not do it quickly. 6So the king called Jehoiada the chief *priest,* and said to him, "Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and from Jerusalem the collection, *according to the commandment* of Moses the servant of the LORD and of the assembly of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?" 7For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had also presented all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD to the Baals.

8Then at the king's command they made a chest, and set it outside at the gate of the house of the LORD. 9And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring to the LORD the collection *that* Moses the servant of God *had imposed* on Israel in the wilderness. 10Then all the leaders and all the people rejoiced, brought their contributions, and put *them* into the chest until all had given. 11So it was, at that time, when the chest was brought to the king's official by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that *there was* much money, that the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it and returned it to its place. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.

12The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the work of the service of the house of the LORD; and they hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also those who worked in iron and bronze to restore the house of the LORD. 13So the workmen labored, and the work was completed by them; they restored the house of God to its original condition and reinforced it. 14When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; they made from it articles for the house of the LORD, articles for serving and offering, spoons and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

Apostasy of Joash

15But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; *he was* one hundred and thirty years old when he died. 16And they buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house.

17Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. 18Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. 19Yet He sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the LORD; and they testified against them, but they would not listen.

20Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.'" 21So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. 22Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The LORD look on *it,* and repay!"

Death of Joash

23So it happened in the spring of the year *that* the army of Syria came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus. 24For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; but the LORD delivered a very great army into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash. 25And when they had withdrawn from him (for they left him

severely wounded), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the sons[a] of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed. So he died. And they buried him in the City of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.

[26]These are the ones who conspired against him: Zabad[a] the son of Shimeath the Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith[b] the Moabitess. [27]Now *concerning* his sons, and the many oracles about him, and the repairing of the house of God, indeed they *are* written in the annals of the book of the kings. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

Amaziah Reigns in Judah

25 Amaziah *was* twenty-five years old *when* he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. [2]And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a loyal heart.

[3]Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established for him, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. [4]However he did not execute their children, but *did* as *it is* written in the Law in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall die for his own sin."[a]

The War Against Edom

[5]Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, according to *their* fathers' houses, throughout all Judah and Benjamin; and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them to be three hundred thousand choice *men, able* to go to war, who could handle spear and shield. [6]He also hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valor from Israel for one hundred talents of silver. [7]But a man of God came to him, saying, "O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD *is* not with Israel—*not with* any of the children of Ephraim. [8]But if you go, be gone! Be strong in battle! *Even so,* God shall make you fall before the enemy; for God has power to help and to overthrow."

[9]Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what *shall we* do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?"

And the man of God answered, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this." [10]So Amaziah discharged the troops that had come to him from Ephraim, to go back home. Therefore their anger was greatly aroused against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

[11]Then Amaziah strengthened himself, and leading his people, he went to the Valley of Salt and killed ten thousand of the people of Seir. [12]Also the children of Judah took captive ten thousand alive, brought them to the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, so that they all were dashed in pieces.

[13]But as for the soldiers of the army which Amaziah had discharged, so that they would not go with him to battle, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, killed three thousand in them, and took much spoil.

[14]Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up *to be* his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. [15]Therefore the anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, "Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?"

[16]So it was, as he talked with him, that *the king* said to him, "Have we made you the king's counselor? Cease! Why should you be killed?"

Then the prophet ceased, and said, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my advice."

Israel Defeats Judah

[17]Now Amaziah king of Judah asked advice and sent to Joash[a] the son of Jehoahaz, the

24:25 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *son* (compare verses 20–22).
24:26 [a]Or *Jozachar* (compare 2 Kings 12:21) [b]Or *Shomer* (compare 2 Kings 12:21) **25:4** [a]Deuteronomy 24:16 **25:17** [a]Spelled *Jehoash* in 2 Kings 14:8ff

son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face one another *in battle.*"

18And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife'; and a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 19Indeed you say that you have defeated the Edomites, and your heart is lifted up to boast. Stay at home now; why should you meddle with trouble, that you should fall—you and Judah with you?"

20But Amaziah would not heed, for it *came* from God, that He might give them into the hand *of their enemies,* because they sought the gods of Edom. 21So Joash king of Israel went out; and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. 22And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. 23Then Joash the king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth Shemesh; and he brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate—four hundred cubits. 24And *he took* all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

Death of Amaziah

25Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 26Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, from first to last, indeed *are* they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? 27After the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. 28Then they brought him on horses and buried him with his fathers in the City of Judah.

Uzziah Reigns in Judah

26 Now all the people of Judah took Uzziah,[a] who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. 2He built Elath[a] and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers.

3Uzziah *was* sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 4And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 5He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions[a] of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.

6Now he went out and made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities *around* Ashdod and among the Philistines. 7God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites. 8Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong.

9And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the corner buttress of the wall; then he fortified them. 10Also he built towers in the desert. He dug many wells, for he had much livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains; *he also had* farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved the soil.

11Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies, according to the number on their roll as prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains. 12The total number of chief officers[a] of the mighty men of valor *was* two thousand six hundred. 13And under their authority *was* an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. 14Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings *to cast* stones. 15And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame

26:1 [a]Called *Azariah* in 2 Kings 14:21 ff **26:2** [a]Hebrew *Eloth*
26:5 [a]Several Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Arabic read *fear.* **26:12** [a]Literally *chief fathers*

spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.

The Penalty for Uzziah's Pride

16But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to *his* destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. 18And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, "*It is* not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You *shall have* no honor from the LORD God."

19Then Uzziah became furious; and he *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. 20And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he *was* leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him.

21King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

22Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote. 23So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which *belonged* to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

Jotham Reigns in Judah

27 Jotham *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jerushah[a] the daughter of Zadok. 2And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done (although he did not enter the temple of the LORD). But still the people acted corruptly.

3He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD, and he built extensively on the wall of Ophel. 4Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built fortresses and towers. 5He also fought with the king of the Ammonites and defeated them. And the people of Ammon gave him in that year one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. The people of Ammon paid this to him in the second and third years also. 6So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.

7Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9So Jotham rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

Ahaz Reigns in Judah

28 Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David *had done*. 2For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. 3He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 4And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

Syria and Israel Defeat Judah

5Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. They defeated him, and carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought *them* to Damascus. Then he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with a great slaughter. 6For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. 7Zichri,

27:1 [a]Spelled *Jerusha* in 2 Kings 15:33



a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer over the house, and Elkanah *who was* second to the king. 8And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters; and they also took away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

Israel Returns the Captives

9But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded; and he went out before the army that came to Samaria, and said to them: "Look, because the LORD God of your fathers was angry with Judah, He has delivered them into your hand; but you have killed them in a rage *that* reaches up to heaven. 10And now you propose to force the children of Judah and Jerusalem to be your male and female slaves; *but are* you not also guilty before the LORD your God? 11Now hear me, therefore, and return the captives, whom you have taken captive from your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you."

12Then some of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against those who came from the war, 13and said to them, "You shall not bring the captives here, for we *already* have offended the LORD. You intend to add to our sins and to our guilt; for our guilt is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel." 14So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the leaders and all the assembly. 15Then the men who were designated by name rose up and took the captives, and from the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, gave them food and drink, and anointed them; and they let all the feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

Assyria Refuses to Help Judah

16At the same time King Ahaz sent to the kings[a] of Assyria to help him. 17For again the Edomites had come, attacked Judah, and carried away captives. 18The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Sochoh with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they dwelt there. 19For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD. 20Also Tiglath-Pileser[a] king of Assyria came to him and distressed him, and did not assist him. 21For Ahaz took part *of the treasures* from the house of the LORD, from the house of the king, and from the leaders, and he gave *it* to the king of Assyria; but he did not help him.

Apostasy and Death of Ahaz

22Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD. This *is that* King Ahaz. 23For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me." But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. 24So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. 25And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers.

26Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 27So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem; but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah Reigns in Judah

29 Hezekiah became king *when he was* twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Abijah[a] the daughter of Zechariah. 2And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

28:16 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *king* (compare verse 20).
28:20 [a]Hebrew *Tilgath-Pilneser* **29:1** [a]Spelled *Abi* in 2 Kings 18:2

HYMNS

Then Hezekiah answered and said, "Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD." So the assembly brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and as many as were of a willing heart brought burnt offerings

2 CHRONICLES 29:31

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

ROMANS 12:1

No matter how many times we might have read the Bible, listened to sermons, or thumbed through devotionals, we will never come to a point when we can't learn something new, gain a fresh revelation, or be convicted by what would seem to be old hat. Take Frances R. Havergal: she had walked with the Lord, actively serving Him for years. She was fluent in Hebrew and Greek. She taught Sunday school and visited the needy. She even knew whole books of the Bible by heart. But it was only when she read a book called *All for Jesus* that she saw she had not truly given every aspect—her talents, her resources, her possessions, her time, everything!—to the Lord. She explained to her sister, "Yes, it was on Advent Sunday, December 2, 1873, I first saw clearly the blessedness of true consecration. I saw it as a flash of electric light, and what you see, you can never un-see. There must be full surrender before there can be full blessedness. . . . First, I was shown that 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,' and then it was made plain to me that He Who had thus cleansed me had power to keep me clean; so I just utterly yielded myself to Him, and utterly trusted Him to keep me."

Soon after this experience, Frances made a five-day visit to a friend's home, where she says, "There were ten persons in the house, some unconverted and long prayed for, some converted but not rejoicing Christians. He gave me the prayer, 'Lord, give me all in this house!' And He just did! Before I left the house everyone had got a blessing." Too excited to sleep, Frances stayed up and wrote "Take My Life and Let It Be," seeing the fruit of what a life fully committed to Christ can produce. But she didn't just talk the talk. After ruminating on her own lyrics, she was inspired to dedicate her voice solely to singing for God, despite her successful secular singing career. Another time, determined not to withhold a mite of her silver or gold, she donated all of her jewelry, except for two family items, to the church missionary society.

Just a few years later, Frances Havergal went home to be with the Lord, but she finished her time on earth well, giving everything she had to God and not regretting it for a moment, as she explained later to her sister, "It's no mistake, Marie, about the blessing God sent me December 2, 1873 . . . I am always happy, and it is such peace."

Take My Life and Let It Be

Frances R. Havergal | 1874

1. Take *my life* and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in endless praise.

2. Take *my hands* and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

3. Take *my voice* and let me sing,
Always, only for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

4. Take *my silver* and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
Every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

5. Take *my will* and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

6. Take *my love*, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Hezekiah Cleanses the Temple

3 In the first year of his reign, in the first
month, he opened the doors of the house
of the LORD and repaired them. 4 Then he
brought in the priests and the Levites, and
gathered them in the East Square, 5 and said
to them: "Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify
yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD
God of your fathers, and carry out the rub-
bish from the holy *place.* 6 For our fathers
have trespassed and done evil in the eyes
of the LORD our God; they have forsaken
Him, have turned their faces away from the
dwelling place of the LORD, and turned *their*
backs *on Him.* 7 They have also shut up the
doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps,
and have not burned incense or offered
burnt offerings in the holy *place* to the God
of Israel. 8 Therefore the wrath of the LORD
fell upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has
given them up to trouble, to desolation,
and to jeering, as you see with your eyes.
9 For indeed, because of this our fathers
have fallen by the sword; and our sons, our
daughters, and our wives *are* in captivity.
10 "Now *it is* in my heart to make a cov-
enant with the LORD God of Israel, that His
fierce wrath may turn away from us. 11 My
sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD
has chosen you to stand before Him, to
serve Him, and that you should minister to
Him and burn incense."
12 Then these Levites arose: Mahath the
son of Amasai and Joel the son of Azariah,
of the sons of the Kohathites; of the sons
of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi and Azariah
the son of Jehallelel; of the Gershonites,
Joah the son of Zimmah and Eden the son
of Joah; 13 of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri
and Jeiel; of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah
and Mattaniah; 14 of the sons of Heman,
Jehiel and Shimei; and of the sons of
Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.
15 And they gathered their brethren,
sanctified themselves, and went according
to the commandment of the king, at the
words of the LORD, to cleanse the house
of the LORD. 16 Then the priests went into
the inner part of the house of the LORD to
cleanse *it,* and brought out all the debris
that they found in the temple of the LORD
to the court of the house of the LORD. And
the Levites took *it* out and carried *it* to the
Brook Kidron.
17 Now they began to sanctify on the first
day of the first month, and on the eighth
day of the month they came to the vestibule
of the LORD. So they sanctified the house of
the LORD in eight days, and on the sixteenth
day of the first month they finished.
18 Then they went in to King Hezekiah
and said, "We have cleansed all the house
of the LORD, the altar of burnt offerings
with all its articles, and the table of the
showbread with all its articles. 19 Moreover
all the articles which King Ahaz in his reign
had cast aside in his transgression we have
prepared and sanctified; and there they
are, before the altar of the LORD."

Hezekiah Restores Temple Worship

20 Then King Hezekiah rose early, gath-
ered the rulers of the city, and went up to
the house of the LORD. 21 And they brought
seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and
seven male goats for a sin offering for the
kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah.
Then he commanded the priests, the sons
of Aaron, to offer *them* on the altar of the
LORD. 22 So they killed the bulls, and the
priests received the blood and sprinkled *it*
on the altar. Likewise they killed the rams
and sprinkled the blood on the altar. They
also killed the lambs and sprinkled the
blood on the altar. 23 Then they brought
out the male goats *for* the sin offering
before the king and the assembly, and
they laid their hands on them. 24 And the
priests killed them; and they presented
their blood on the altar as a sin offering
to make an atonement for all Israel, for the
king commanded *that* the burnt offering
and the sin offering *be made* for all Israel.
25 And he stationed the Levites in the
house of the LORD with cymbals, with
stringed instruments, and with harps,
according to the commandment of David,
of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the
prophet; for thus *was* the commandment
of the LORD by His prophets. 26 The Levites
stood with the instruments of David, and the
priests with the trumpets. 27 Then Hezekiah
commanded *them* to offer the burnt offering
on the altar. And when the burnt offering
began, the song of the LORD *also* began,

Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel.

2 CHRONICLES 29:27

with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. 28So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all *this continued* until the burnt offering was finished. 29And when

So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.

2 CHRONICLES 29:28

they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped. 30Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.

31Then Hezekiah answered and said, "Now *that* you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD." So the assembly brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and as many as were of a willing heart *brought* burnt offerings. 32And the number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was seventy bulls, one hundred rams, *and* two hundred lambs; all these *were* for a burnt offering to the LORD. 33The consecrated things *were* six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep. 34But the priests were too few, so that they could not skin all the burnt offerings; therefore their brethren the Levites helped them until the work was ended and until the *other* priests had sanctified themselves, for the Levites were more diligent in sanctifying themselves than the priests. 35Also the burnt offerings *were* in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings and *with* the drink offerings for *every* burnt offering.

So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. 36Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people, since the events took place so suddenly.

Hezekiah Keeps the Passover

30 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. 2For the king and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. 3For they could not keep it at the regular time,[a] because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem. 4And the matter pleased the king and all the assembly. 5So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done *it* for a long *time* in the *prescribed* manner.

Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.

2 CHRONICLES 29:30

6Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the command of the king: "Children of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. 7And do not

30:3 [a]That is, the first month (compare Leviticus 23:5); literally *at that time*

be like your fathers and your brethren, who trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, so that He gave them up to desolation, as you see. 8Now do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers *were, but* yield yourselves to the LORD; and enter His sanctuary, which He has sanctified forever, and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. 9For if you return to the LORD, your brethren and your children *will be treated* with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the LORD your God *is* gracious and merciful, and will not turn *His* face from you if you return to Him."

10So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but they laughed at them and mocked them. 11Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. 12Also the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, at the word of the LORD.

13Now many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. 14They arose and took away the altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and they took away all the incense altars and cast *them* into the Brook Kidron. 15Then they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the fourteenth *day* of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought the burnt offerings to the house of the LORD. 16They stood in their place according to their custom, according to the Law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood *received* from the hand of the Levites. 17For *there were* many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover *lambs* for everyone *who was* not clean, to sanctify *them* to the LORD. 18For a multitude of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD provide atonement for everyone 19*who* prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though *he is* not *cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary." 20And the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments.

2 CHRONICLES 30:21

21So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, *singing* to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments. 22And Hezekiah gave encouragement to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of the LORD; and they ate throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

23Then the whole assembly agreed to keep *the feast* another seven days, and they kept it *another* seven days with gladness. 24For Hezekiah king of Judah gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the leaders gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. 25The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, also the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel, and those who dwelt in Judah. 26So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, *there had* been nothing like this in Jerusalem. 27Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came *up* to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.

The Reforms of Hezekiah

31 Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the *sacred*

pillars in pieces, cut down the wooden images, and threw down the high places and the altars—from all Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh—until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned to their own cities, every man to his possession.

2And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites according to their divisions, each man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and peace offerings, to serve, to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the camp[a] of the LORD. 3The king also *appointed* a portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings: for the morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the New Moons and the set feasts, as *it is* written in the Law of the LORD.

4Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute support for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the LORD.

5As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. 6And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the LORD their God they laid in heaps.

7In the third month they began laying them in heaps, and they finished in the seventh month. 8And when Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel. 9Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. 10And Azariah the chief priest, from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, "Since *the people* began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed His people; and what is left *is* this great abundance."

11Now Hezekiah commanded *them* to prepare rooms in the house of the LORD, and they prepared them. 12Then they faithfully brought in the offerings, the tithes, and the dedicated things; Cononiah the Levite had charge of them, and Shimei his brother *was* the next. 13Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah *were* overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king and Azariah the ruler of the house of God. 14Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the East Gate, *was* over the freewill offerings to God, to distribute the offerings of the LORD and the most holy things. 15And under him *were* Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, *his* faithful assistants in the cities of the priests, to distribute allotments to their brethren by divisions, to the great as well as the small.

16Besides those males from three years old and up who were written in the genealogy, they distributed to everyone who entered the house of the LORD his daily portion for the work of his service, by his division, 17and to the priests who were written in the genealogy according to their father's house, and to the Levites from twenty years old and up according to their work, by their divisions, 18and to all who were written in the genealogy—their little ones and their wives, their sons and daughters, the whole company of them—for in their faithfulness they sanctified themselves in holiness.

19Also for the sons of Aaron the priests, *who were* in the fields of the common-lands of their cities, in every single city, *there were* men who were designated by name to distribute portions to all the males among the priests and to all who were listed by genealogies among the Levites.

20Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what *was* good and right and true before the LORD his God. 21And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart. So he prospered.

Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD

32 After these deeds of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered Judah; he encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them

31:2 [a]That is, the temple

over to himself. 2And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that his purpose was to make war against Jerusalem, 3he consulted with his leaders and commanders[a] to stop the water from the springs which *were* outside the city; and they helped him. 4Thus many people gathered together who stopped all the springs and the brook that ran through the land, saying, "Why should the kings[a] of Assyria come and find much water?" 5And he strengthened himself, built up all the wall that was broken, raised *it* up to the towers, and *built* another wall outside; also he repaired the Millo[a] *in* the City of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance. 6Then he set military captains over the people, gathered them together to him in the open square of the city gate, and gave them encouragement, saying, 7"Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that *is* with him; for *there are* more with us than with him. 8With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

9After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem (but he and all the forces with him *laid siege* against Lachish), to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all Judah who *were* in Jerusalem, saying, 10"Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria: 'In what do you trust, that you remain under siege in Jerusalem? 11Does not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, "The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria"? 12Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, "You shall worship before one altar and burn incense on it"? 13Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of *other* lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands in any way able to deliver their lands out of my hand? 14Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed that could deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand? 15Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you like this, and do not believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?'"

16Furthermore, his servants spoke against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah.

17He also wrote letters to revile the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, "As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand." 18Then they called out with a loud voice in Hebrew[a] to the people of Jerusalem who *were* on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them, that they might take the city. 19And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth—the work of men's hands.

Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

20Now because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven. 21Then the LORD sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land. And when he had gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword there.

22Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *others,* and guided them[a] on every side. 23And many brought gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.

Hezekiah Humbles Himself

24In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor *shown* him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 26Then Hezekiah

32:3 [a]Literally *mighty men* **32:4** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Arabic, Septuagint, and Syriac read *king.* **32:5** [a]Literally *The Landfill* **32:18** [a]Literally *Judean* **32:22** [a]Septuagint reads *gave them rest;* Vulgate reads *gave them treasures.*

humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah's Wealth and Honor

27 Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; 28 storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks.[a] 29 Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property. 30 This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel[a] to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works.

31 However, *regarding* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was *done* in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all *that was* in his heart.

Death of Hezekiah

32 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, indeed they *are* written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, *and* in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 33 So Hezekiah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

Manasseh Reigns in Judah

33 Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2 But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven[a] and served them. 4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem shall My name be forever." 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 7 He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers—only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses." 9 So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

Manasseh Restored After Repentance

10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. 11 Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks,[a] bound him with bronze *fetters,* and carried him off to Babylon. 12 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD *was* God.

14 After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and *it* enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15 He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all

32:28 [a]Following Septuagint and Vulgate; Arabic and Syriac omit *folds for flocks;* Masoretic Text reads *flocks for sheepfolds.* **32:30** [a]Literally *brought it straight* (compare 2 Kings 20:20) **33:3** [a]The gods of the Assyrians **33:11** [a]That is, nose hooks (compare 2 Kings 19:28)

the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast *them* out of the city. 16He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. 17Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, *but* only to the LORD their God.

Death of Manasseh

18Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, indeed they *are written* in the book[a] of the kings of Israel. 19Also his prayer and *how God* received his entreaty, and all his sin and trespass, and the sites where he built high places and set up wooden images and carved images, before he was humbled, indeed they *are* written among the sayings of Hozai.[a] 20So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

Amon's Reign and Death

21Amon *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done; for Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and served them. 23And he did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more.

24Then his servants conspired against him, and killed him in his own house. 25But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

Josiah Reigns in Judah

34 Josiah *was* eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; *he* did *not* turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

3For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. 4They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which *were* above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered *it* on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. 5He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6And *so he did* in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali and all around, with axes.[a] 7When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

And the men did the work faithfully. . . . Others of the Levites, all of whom were skillful with instruments of music, were over the burden bearers and were overseers of all who did work in any kind of service.

2 CHRONICLES 34:12, 13

Hilkiah Finds the Book of the Law

8In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the temple,[a] he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 9When they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites who kept the doors had gathered from the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and *which* they had brought back to Jerusalem. 10Then they put *it* in the hand of the foremen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they gave it to the workmen who worked in the house of the LORD, to repair and restore

33:18 [a]Literally *words* **33:19** [a]Septuagint reads *the seers.*
34:6 [a]Literally *swords* **34:8** [a]Literally *house*

the house. 11They gave *it* to the craftsmen and builders to buy hewn stone and timber for beams, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. 12And the men did the work faithfully. Their overseers *were* Jahath and Obadiah the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to supervise. *Others of* the Levites, all of whom were skillful with instruments of music, 13*were* over the burden bearers and *were* overseers of all who did work in any kind of service. And *some* of the Levites *were* scribes, officers, and gatekeepers.

14Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD *given* by Moses. 15Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. 16So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing. 17And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen." 18Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

19Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes. 20Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon[a] the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, 21"Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."

22So Hilkiah and those the king *had appointed* went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath,[a] the son of Hasrah,[b] keeper of the wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke to her to that *effect*.

23Then she answered them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me, 24"Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah, 25because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place, and not be quenched.'" ' 26But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "*Concerning* the words which you have heard— 27because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard *you*," says the LORD. 28"Surely I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place and its inhabitants." '" So they brought back word to the king.

Josiah Restores True Worship

29Then the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30The king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the Levites, and all the people, great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD. 31Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. 32And he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 33Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that *belonged* to the children of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the LORD their God.

34:20 [a]*Achbor the son of Michaiah* in 2 Kings 22:12 **34:22** [a]Spelled *Tikvah* in 2 Kings 22:14 [b]Spelled *Harhas* in 2 Kings 22:14

All his days they did not depart from following the LORD God of their fathers.

Josiah Keeps the Passover

35 Now Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the fourteenth *day* of the first month. 2And he set the priests in their duties and encouraged them for the service of the house of the LORD. 3Then he said to the Levites who taught all Israel, who were holy to the LORD: "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. *It shall* no longer *be* a burden on *your* shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel. 4Prepare *yourselves* according to your fathers' houses, according to your divisions, following the written instruction of David king of Israel and the written instruction of Solomon his son. 5And stand in the holy *place* according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of your brethren the *lay* people, and *according to* the division of the father's house of the Levites. 6So slaughter the Passover *offerings,* consecrate yourselves, and prepare *them* for your brethren, that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses."

7Then Josiah gave the *lay* people lambs and young goats from the flock, all for Passover *offerings* for all who were present, to the number of thirty thousand, as well as three thousand cattle; these *were* from the king's possessions. 8And his leaders gave willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover *offerings* two thousand six hundred *from the flock,* and three hundred cattle. 9Also Conaniah, his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave to the Levites for Passover *offerings* five thousand *from the flock* and five hundred cattle.

10So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their places, and the Levites in their divisions, according to the king's command. 11And they slaughtered the Passover *offerings;* and the priests sprinkled *the blood* with their hands, while the Levites skinned *the animals.* 12Then they removed the burnt offerings that *they* might give them to the divisions of the fathers' houses of the *lay* people, to offer to the LORD, as *it is* written in the Book of Moses. And so *they did* with the cattle. 13Also they roasted the Passover *offerings* with fire according to the ordinance; but the *other* holy *offerings* they boiled in pots, in caldrons, and in pans, and divided *them* quickly among all the *lay* people. 14Then afterward they prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, *were busy* in offering burnt offerings and fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron. 15And the singers, the sons of Asaph, *were* in their places, according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer. Also the gatekeepers were at each gate; they did not have to leave their position, because their brethren the Levites prepared portions for them.

16So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. 17And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. 18There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the



prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [19]In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept.

Josiah Dies in Battle

[20]After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him. [21]But he sent messengers to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? *I have* not *come* against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain *from meddling with* God, who *is* with me, lest He destroy you." [22]Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.

[23]And the archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am severely wounded." [24]His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in *one of* the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they are written in the Laments.

2 CHRONICLES 35:25

[25]Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they *are* written in the Laments.

[26]Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness, according to *what was* written in the Law of the LORD, [27]and his deeds from first to last, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoahaz

36 Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem. [2]Jehoahaz[a] *was* twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. [3]Now the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. [4]Then the king of Egypt made *Jehoahaz's*[a] brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz[b] his brother and carried him off to Egypt.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoiakim

[5]Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God. [6]Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him, and bound him in bronze *fetters* to carry him off to Babylon. [7]Nebuchadnezzar also carried off *some* of the articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. [8]Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoiachin

[9]Jehoiachin *was* eight[a] years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. [10]At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar summoned *him* and took him to Babylon, with the costly articles from the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah, *Jehoiakim's*[a] brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah Reigns in Judah

[11]Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years

36:2 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Joahaz*. **36:4** [a]Literally *his* [b]Masoretic Text reads *Joahaz*. **36:9** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and 2 Kings 24:8 read *eighteen*. **36:10** [a]Literally *his* (compare 2 Kings 24:17)

in Jerusalem. [12]He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, *who spoke* from the mouth of the LORD. [13]And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear *an oath* by God; but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel. [14]Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, *according* to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the LORD which He had consecrated in Jerusalem.

The Fall of Jerusalem

[15]And the LORD God of their fathers sent *warnings* to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending *them,* because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. [16]But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till *there was* no remedy.

[17]Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave *them* all into his hand. [18]And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all *these* he took to Babylon. [19]Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. [20]And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, [21]to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

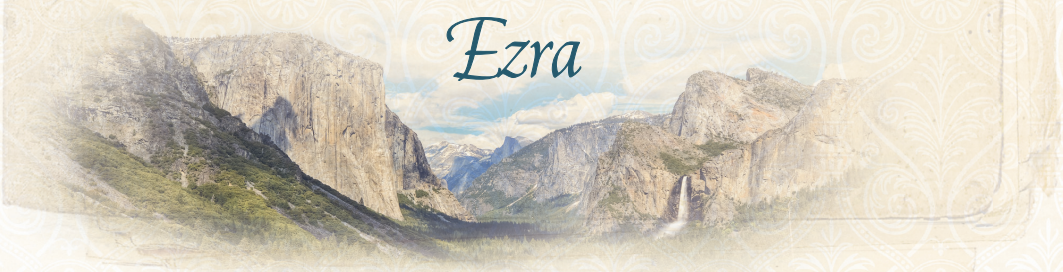
The Proclamation of Cyrus

[22]Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying,

[23] Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:
All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD
God of heaven has given me. And He
has commanded me to build Him a
house at Jerusalem which is in Judah.
Who *is* among you of all His people?
May the LORD his God *be* with him, and
let him go up!

THE BOOK OF

Ezra



End of the Babylonian Captivity

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying,

2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:
All the kingdoms of the earth the
LORD God of heaven has given me.
And He has commanded me to build
Him a house at Jerusalem which *is* in
Judah. 3Who *is* among you of all His
people? May his God be with him,
and let him go up to Jerusalem which
is in Judah, and build the house of the
LORD God of Israel (He *is* God), which
is in Jerusalem. 4And whoever is left
in any place where he dwells, let the
men of his place help him with silver
and gold, with goods and livestock,
besides the freewill offerings for the
house of God which *is* in Jerusalem.

5Then the heads of the fathers' *houses* of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem. 6And all those who *were* around them encouraged them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with precious things, besides all *that* was willingly offered.

7King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; 8and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. 9This *is* the number of them: thirty gold platters, one thousand silver platters, twenty-nine knives, 10thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a similar *kind, and* one thousand other articles. 11All the articles of gold and silver *were* five thousand four hundred. All *these* Sheshbazzar took with the captives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem

2 Now[a] these *are* the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his *own* city.

2*Those* who came with Zerubbabel *were* Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar,[a] Bigvai, Rehum,[b] *and* Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: 3the people of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two; 4the people of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two; 5the people of Arah, seven hundred and seventy-five; 6the people of Pahath-Moab, of the people of Jeshua *and* Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve; 7the people of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 8the people of Zattu, nine hundred and forty-five; 9the people of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty; 10the people of Bani,[a] six hundred and forty-two; 11the people of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-three; 12the people of Azgad, one thousand two hundred and twenty-two; 13the people of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-six; 14the people of Bigvai, two thousand and fifty-six; 15the people of Adin, four hundred and fifty-four; 16the people of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight; 17the people of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-three; 18the people

2:1 [a]Compare this chapter with Nehemiah 7:6–73. **2:2** [a]Spelled *Mispereth* in Nehemiah 7:7 [b]Spelled *Nehum* in Nehemiah 7:7
2:10 [a]Spelled *Binnui* in Nehemiah 7:15

of Jorah,[a] one hundred and twelve; [19]the people of Hashum, two hundred and twenty-three; [20]the people of Gibbar,[a] ninety-five; [21]the people of Bethlehem, one hundred and twenty-three; [22]the men of Netophah, fifty-six; [23]the men of Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight; [24]the people of Azmaveth,[a] forty-two; [25]the people of Kirjath Arim,[a] Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; [26]the people of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one; [27]the men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two; [28]the men of Bethel and Ai, two hundred and twenty-three; [29]the people of Nebo, fifty-two; [30]the people of Magbish, one hundred and fifty-six; [31]the people of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; [32]the people of Harim, three hundred and twenty; [33]the people of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-five; [34]the people of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five; [35]the people of Senaah, three thousand six hundred and thirty.

[36]The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three; [37]the sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two; [38]the sons of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; [39]the sons of Harim, one thousand and seventeen.

[40]The Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the sons of Hodaviah,[a] seventy-four.

[41]The singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and twenty-eight.

[42]The sons of the gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, and the sons of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-nine *in* all.

[43]The Nethinim: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, [44]the sons of Keros, the sons of Siaha,[a] the sons of Padon, [45]the sons of Lebanah, the sons of Hagabah, the sons of Akkub, [46]the sons of Hagab, the sons of Shalmai, the sons of Hanan, [47]the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Reaiah, [48]the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, the sons of Gazzam, [49]the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, the sons of Besai, [50]the sons of Asnah, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephusim,[a] [51]the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur, [52]the sons of Bazluth,[a] the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, [53]the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Tamah, [54]the sons of Neziah, and the sons of Hatipha.

[55]The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Peruda,[a] [56]the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, [57]the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim, and the sons of Ami.[a] [58]All the Nethinim and the children of Solomon's servants were three hundred and ninety-two.

[59]And these *were* the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addan,[a] and Immer; but they could not identify their father's house or their genealogy,[b] whether they *were* of Israel: [60]the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, and the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and fifty-two; [61]and of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz,[a] and the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name. [62]These sought their listing *among* those who were registered by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore they *were excluded* from the priesthood as defiled. [63]And the governor[a] said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.

[64]The whole assembly together *was* forty-two thousand three hundred *and* sixty, [65]besides their male and female servants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred men and women singers. [66]Their horses *were* seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, [67]their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and *their* donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

[68]*Some* of the heads of the fathers' *houses,* when they came to the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God, to erect it in its place: [69]According to their ability, they gave to the

2:18 [a]Called *Hariph* in Nehemiah 7:24 **2:20** [a]Called *Gibeon* in Nehemiah 7:25 **2:24** [a]Called *Beth Azmaveth* in Nehemiah 7:28 **2:25** [a]Called *Kirjath Jearim* in Nehemiah 7:29 **2:40** [a]Spelled *Hodevah* in Nehemiah 7:43 **2:44** [a]Spelled *Sia* in Nehemiah 7:47 **2:50** [a]Spelled *Nephishesim* in Nehemiah 7:52 **2:52** [a]Spelled *Bazlith* in Nehemiah 7:54 **2:55** [a]Spelled *Perida* in Nehemiah 7:57 **2:57** [a]Spelled *Amon* in Nehemiah 7:59 **2:59** [a]Spelled *Addon* in Nehemiah 7:61 [b]Literally *seed* **2:61** [a]Or *Hakkoz* **2:63** [a]Hebrew *Tirshatha*

treasury for the work sixty-one thousand gold drachmas, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priestly garments.

70So the priests and the Levites, *some* of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

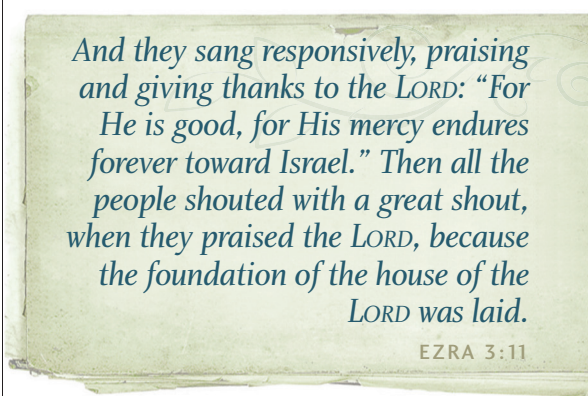
Worship Restored at Jerusalem

3 And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. 2Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak[a] and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as *it is* written in the Law of Moses the man of God. 3Though fear *had come* upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, *both* the morning and evening burnt offerings. 4They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as *it is* written, and *offered* the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day. 5Afterwards *they offered* the regular burnt offering, and *those* for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and *those* of everyone who willingly offered a free-will offering to the LORD. 6From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, although the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid. 7They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

Restoration of the Temple Begins

8Now in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of Jozadak,[a] and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began *work* and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and above to oversee the work of the house of the LORD. 9Then Jeshua *with* his sons and brothers, Kadmiel *with* his sons, and the sons of Judah,[a] arose as one to oversee those working on the house of God: the sons of Henadad *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood[a] in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. 11And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD:



"For *He is* good,
For His mercy *endures* forever toward Israel."[a]

Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

12But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' *houses*, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, 13so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.

Resistance to Rebuilding the Temple

4 Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the LORD God of Israel, 2they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers'

3:2 [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14 **3:8** [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14 **3:9** [a]Or *Hodaviah* (compare 2:40)
3:10 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *they stationed the priests.* **3:11** [a]Compare Psalm 136:1

houses, and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you *do;* and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here." [3]But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' *houses* of Israel said to them, "You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us." [4]Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, [5]and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Rebuilding of Jerusalem Opposed

[6]In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

[7]In the days of Artaxerxes also, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabel, and the rest of their companions wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the letter *was* written in Aramaic script, and translated into the Aramaic language. [8]Rehum[a] the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes in this fashion:

[9] From[a] Rehum the commander,
Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of
their companions—*representatives* of
the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites,
the Tarpelites, the people of
Persia and Erech and Babylon
and Shushan,[b] the Dehavites, the
Elamites, [10]and the rest of the nations
whom the great and noble Osnapper
took captive and settled in the cities of Samaria and the remainder
beyond the River[a]—and so forth.[b]

[11](This *is* a copy of the letter that they sent him)

To King Artaxerxes from your servants, the men *of the region* beyond
the River, and so forth:[a]

4:8 [a]The original language of Ezra 4:8 through 6:18 is Aramaic.
4:9 [a]Literally *Then* [b]Or *Susa* **4:10** [a]That is, the Euphrates [b]Literally *and now* **4:11** [a]Literally *and now*



TANYA GOODMAN SYKES • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Daughter of Rusty Goodman, Niece of Vestal and Howard Goodman

Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. | EZRA 4:4, 5

As the Jews were attempting to rebuild the temple, they were hindered in their work. They became so frustrated that they stopped entirely for years. Many times when God has called us to some purpose or work for Him, there will be those who will discourage or attempt to make us second-guess our calling. That's why it's so important to spend time in prayer and in God's Word—that we may maintain our focus and not be overcome by discouragement. "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

12 Let it be known to the king that
the Jews who came up from you
have come to us at Jerusalem, and
are building the rebellious and evil
city, and are finishing *its* walls and
repairing the foundations. 13Let it
now be known to the king that, if
this city is built and the walls com-
pleted, they will not pay tax, tribute,
or custom, and the king's treasury
will be diminished. 14Now because
we receive support from the palace,
it was not proper for us to see the
king's dishonor; therefore we have
sent and informed the king, 15that
search may be made in the book of
the records of your fathers. And you
will find in the book of the records
and know that this city *is* a rebellious
city, harmful to kings and provinces,
and that they have incited sedition
within the city in former times, for
which cause this city was destroyed.

16 We inform the king that if this city is
rebuilt and its walls are completed,
the result will be that you will have
no dominion beyond the River.

17The king sent an answer:

To Rehum the commander, *to*
Shimshai the scribe, *to* the rest
of their companions who dwell
in Samaria, and *to* the remainder
beyond the River:

Peace, and so forth.[a]

18 The letter which you sent to us has
been clearly read before me. 19And
I gave the command, and a search
has been made, and it was found
that this city in former times has
revolted against kings, and rebellion
and sedition have been fostered in
it. 20There have also been mighty
kings over Jerusalem, who have
ruled over all *the region* beyond the
River; and tax, tribute, and custom
were paid to them. 21Now give the
command to make these men cease,
that this city may not be built until
the command is given by me.

22 Take heed now that you do not fail
to do this. Why should damage
increase to the hurt of the kings?

23Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes'
letter *was* read before Rehum, Shimshai the
scribe, and their companions, they went
up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews,
and by force of arms made them cease.
24Thus the work of the house of God which
is at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discon-
tinued until the second year of the reign
of Darius king of Persia.

Restoration of the Temple Resumed

5 Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah
the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to
the Jews who *were* in Judah and Jerusalem, in
the name of the God of Israel, *who was* over
them. 2So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel
and Jeshua the son of Jozadak[a] rose up and
began to build the house of God which *is*
in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God *were*
with them, helping them.

3At the same time Tattenai the governor
of *the region* beyond the River[a] and Shethar-
Boznai and their companions came to them
and spoke thus to them: "Who has com-
manded you to build this temple and finish
this wall?" 4Then, accordingly, we told them
the names of the men who were construct-
ing this building. 5But the eye of their God
was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they
could not make them cease till a report
could go to Darius. Then a written answer
was returned concerning this *matter.* 6This
is a copy of the letter that Tattenai sent:

The governor of *the region* beyond
the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and
his companions, the Persians who
were in the region beyond the River,
to Darius the king.

7(They sent a letter to him, in which was
written thus)

To Darius the king:

All peace.

8 Let it be known to the king that we
went into the province of Judea, to

4:17 [a]Literally *and now* **5:2** [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14
5:3 [a]That is, the Euphrates

the temple of the great God, which is being built with heavy stones, and timber is being laid in the walls; and this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands.

9 Then we asked those elders, *and* spoke thus to them: "Who commanded you to build this temple and to finish these walls?" 10We also asked them their names to inform you, that we might write the names of the men who *were* chief among them.

11 And thus they returned us an answer, saying: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed. 12But because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, *who* destroyed this temple and carried the people away to Babylon. 13However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God. 14Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple that *was* in Jerusalem and carried into the temple of Babylon—those King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon, and they were given to one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor. 15And he said to him, 'Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple *site* that *is* in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.' 16Then the same Sheshbazzar came *and* laid the foundation of the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem; but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not finished."

17 Now therefore, if *it seems* good to the king, let a search be made in the king's treasure house, which *is* there in Babylon, whether it is *so* that a decree was issued by King Cyrus to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this *matter.*

The Decree of Darius

6 Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives,[a] where the treasures were stored in Babylon. 2And at Achmetha,[a] in the palace that *is* in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record *was* written thus:

3 In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits *and* its width sixty cubits, 4*with* three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury. 5Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which *is* in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which *is* in Jerusalem, *each* to its place; and deposit *them* in the house of God"—

6 Now *therefore,* Tattenai, governor of *the region* beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Persians who *are* beyond the River, keep yourselves far from there. 7Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site.

8 Moreover I issue a decree *as to* what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes *on the region* beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered. 9And whatever they need—young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who *are* in Jerusalem—let it be given them day by day without fail, 10that

6:1 [a]Literally *house of the scrolls* **6:2** [a]Probably *Ecbatana,* the ancient capital of Media

they may offer sacrifices of sweet
aroma to the God of heaven, and pray
for the life of the king and his sons.

11 Also I issue a decree that whoever
alters this edict, let a timber be
pulled from his house and erected,
and let him be hanged on it; and
let his house be made a refuse heap
because of this. 12And may the God
who causes His name to dwell there
destroy any king or people who put
their hand to alter it, or to destroy
this house of God which is in
Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree;
let it be done diligently.

The Temple Completed and Dedicated

13Then Tattenai, governor of *the region* beyond the River, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions diligently did according to what King Darius had sent. 14So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished *it,* according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. 16Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. 17And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions, over the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses.

The Passover Celebrated

19And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month. 20For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them *were ritually* clean. And they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. 21Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel. 22And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the LORD made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

The Arrival of Ezra

7 Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, 2the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, 3the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, 4the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, 5the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest— 6this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he *was* a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. 7*Some* of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. 8And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king. 9On the first *day* of the first month he began *his* journey from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. 10For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do *it,* and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

The Letter of Artaxerxes to Ezra

11This *is* a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel:

12 Artaxerxes,[a] king of kings,

To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the
Law of the God of heaven:

Perfect *peace,* and so forth.[b]

13 I issue a decree that all those of the

7:12 [a]The original language of Ezra 7:12–26 is Aramaic. [b]Literally *and now*

people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you. [14]And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the Law of your God which *is* in your hand; [15]and *whereas you are* to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling *is* in Jerusalem; [16]and *whereas* all the silver and gold that you may find in all the province of Babylon, along with the freewill offering of the people and the priests, *are to be* freely offered for the house of their God in Jerusalem— [17]now therefore, be careful to buy with this money bulls, rams, and lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them on the altar of the house of your God in Jerusalem.

18 And whatever seems good to you and your brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, do it according to the will of your God. [19]Also the articles that are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem. [20]And whatever more may be needed for the house of your God, which you may have occasion to provide, pay *for it* from the king's treasury.

21 And I, *even* I, Artaxerxes the king, issue a decree to all the treasurers who *are in the region* beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, let it be done diligently, [22]up to one hundred talents of silver, one hundred kors of wheat, one hundred baths of wine, one hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribed limit. [23]Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it diligently be done for the house of the God of heaven. For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?

24 Also we inform you that it shall not be lawful to impose tax, tribute, or custom on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Nethinim, or servants of this house of God. [25]And you, Ezra, according to your God-given wisdom, set magistrates and judges who may judge all the people who *are in the region* beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and teach those who do not know *them*. [26]Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily on him, whether *it be* death, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.

[27]Blessed *be* the LORD God of our fathers, who has put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem, [28]and has extended mercy to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty princes.

So I was encouraged, as the hand of the LORD my God *was* upon me; and I gathered leading men of Israel to go up with me.

Heads of Families Who Returned with Ezra

8 These *are* the heads of their fathers' *houses*, and *this is* the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of King Artaxerxes: [2]of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of David, Hattush; [3]of the sons of Shecaniah, of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah; and registered with him *were* one hundred and fifty males; [4]of the sons of Pahath-Moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males; [5]of the sons of Shechaniah,[a] Ben-Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males; [6]of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males; [7]of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males; [8]of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him eighty males; [9]of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males; [10]of

8:5 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the sons of Zatho, Shechaniah.*

the sons of Shelomith,[a] Ben-Josiphiah, and with him one hundred and sixty males; [11]of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight males; [12]of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him one hundred and ten males; [13]of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names *are* these—Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah—and with them sixty males; [14]also of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

Servants for the Temple

[15]Now I gathered them by the river that flows to Ahava, and we camped there three days. And I looked among the people and the priests, and found none of the sons of Levi there. [16]Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leaders; also for Joiarib and Elnathan, men of understanding. [17]And I gave them a command for Iddo the chief man at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say to Iddo *and* his brethren[a] the Nethinim at the place Casiphia—that they should bring us servants for the house of our God. [18]Then, by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and brothers, eighteen men; [19]and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty men; [20]also of the Nethinim, whom David and the leaders had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinim. All of them were designated by name.

Fasting and Prayer for Protection

[21]Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. [22]For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God *is* upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath *are* against all those who forsake Him." [23]So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.

Gifts for the Temple

[24]And I separated twelve of the leaders of the priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them— [25]and weighed out to them the silver, the gold, and the articles, the offering for the house of our God which the king and his counselors and his princes, and all Israel *who were* present, had offered. [26]I weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, silver articles *weighing* one hundred talents, one hundred talents of gold, [27]twenty gold basins *worth* a thousand drachmas, and two vessels of fine polished bronze, precious as gold. [28]And I said to them, "You *are* holy to the LORD; the articles *are* holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a freewill offering to the LORD God of your fathers. [29]Watch and keep *them* until you weigh *them* before the leaders of the priests and the Levites and heads of the fathers' *houses* of Israel in Jerusalem, *in* the chambers of the house of the LORD." [30]So the priests and the Levites received the silver and the gold and the articles by weight, to bring *them* to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

The Return to Jerusalem

[31]Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road. [32]So we came to Jerusalem, and stayed there three days.

[33]Now on the fourth day the silver and the gold and the articles were weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest, and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; with them *were* the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui, [34]with the number *and* weight of everything. All the weight was written down at that time.

[35]The children of those who had been carried away captive, who had come from the captivity, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve male goats *as* a sin offering. All *this was* a burnt offering to the LORD.

8:10 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the sons of Banni, Shelomith.* **8:17** [a]Following Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *to Iddo his brother;* Septuagint reads *to their brethren.*

[36]And they delivered the king's orders to the king's satraps and the governors *in the region* beyond the River. So they gave support to the people and the house of God.

Intermarriage with Pagans

9 When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. [2]For they have taken some of their daughters *as wives* for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of *those* lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass." [3]So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. [4]Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

[5]At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God. [6]And I said: "O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than *our* heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens. [7]Since the days of our fathers to this day we *have been* very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, *and* our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as *it is* this day. [8]And now for a little while grace has been *shown* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage. [9]For we *were* slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. [10]And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, [11]which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land, with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from one end to another with their impurity. [12]Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons; and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave *it* as an inheritance to your children forever.' [13]And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, since You our God have punished us less than our iniquities *deserve,* and have given us *such* deliverance as this, [14]should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people *committing* these abominations? Would You not be angry with us until You had consumed *us,* so that *there would be* no remnant or survivor? [15]O LORD God of Israel, You *are* righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as *it is* this day. Here we *are* before You, in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this!"

Confession of Improper Marriages

10 Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly. [2]And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this. [3]Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. [4]Arise, for *this* matter *is* your *responsibility.* We also *are* with you. Be of good courage, and do *it.*"

[5]Then Ezra arose, and made the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel swear an oath that they would do according to this word. So they swore an oath. [6]Then Ezra rose up from before the house

of God, and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib; and *when* he came there, he ate no bread and drank no water, for he mourned because of the guilt of those from the captivity.

7And they issued a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the descendants of the captivity, that they must gather at Jerusalem, 8and that whoever would not come within three days, according to the instructions of the leaders and elders, all his property would be confiscated, and he himself would be separated from the assembly of those from the captivity.

9So all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered at Jerusalem within three days. It *was* the ninth month, on the twentieth of the month; and all the people sat in the open square of the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter and because of heavy rain. 10Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel. 11Now therefore, make confession to the LORD God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives."

12Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, "Yes! As you have said, so we must do. 13But *there are* many people; *it is* the season for heavy rain, and we are not able to stand outside. Nor *is this* the work of one or two days, for *there are* many of us who have transgressed in this matter. 14Please, let the leaders of our entire assembly stand; and let all those in our cities who have taken pagan wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of their cities, until the fierce wrath of our God is turned away from us in this matter." 15Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah opposed this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite gave them support.

16Then the descendants of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with* certain heads of the fathers' *households,* were set apart by the fathers' households, each of them by name; and they sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. 17By the first day of the first month they finished *questioning* all the men who had taken pagan wives.

Pagan Wives Put Away

18And among the sons of the priests who had taken pagan wives *the following* were found of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak,[a] and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. 19And they gave their promise that they would put away their wives; and *being* guilty, *they presented* a ram of the flock as their trespass offering.

20Also of the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah; 21of the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah; 22of the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

23Also of the Levites: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (the same *is* Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24Also of the singers: Eliashib; and of the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

25And others of Israel: of the sons of Parosh: Ramiah, Jeziah, Malchiah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malchijah, and Benaiah; 26of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Eliah; 27of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza; 28of the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, *and* Athlai; 29of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, *and* Ramoth;[a] 30of the sons of Pahath-Moab: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh; 31*of* the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, 32Benjamin, Malluch, *and* Shemariah; 33of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, *and* Shimei; 34of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, 35Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluh,[a] 36Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, 37Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasai,[a] 38Bani, Binnui, Shimei, 39Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, 40Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, 41Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, 42Shallum, Amariah, *and* Joseph; 43of the sons of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai,[a] Joel, *and* Benaiah.

44All these had taken pagan wives, and *some* of them had wives *by whom* they had children.

10:18 [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14 **10:29** [a]Or *Jeremoth* **10:35** [a]Or *Cheluhi,* or *Cheluhu* **10:37** [a]Or *Jaasu* **10:43** [a]Or *Jaddu*

THE JOY OF *Music*

Easter is all about joy. Over and over again Jesus talked about joy as He prepared His disciples that last night in the Upper Room before Gethsemane and before the Cross. He talked about how He wanted us to have the same obedient relationship with Him that He had with the Father so that we would stay in His love, so that our "joy may be full."

He said His going away would bring the disciples grief, but afterward He would see them again and their grief would turn to joy, and this joy could never be taken away.

What is this thing called *joy*? Nehemiah said, "The joy of the LORD is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). This joy must be potent! It must make heroes and giants of those who possess it. No wonder the first thing the enemy of our souls wants to steal is our joy. A heart without joy is an easy target.

But joy is tough. It is much deeper and more resilient than happiness. It is a powerful artesian well that works its way to the surface, even when it's buried by the mud of life. It may be silenced for a time, but it will surprise us by bursting into the least likely of days. Bill and I have proven this to be true in our own lives. The joy of the Lord *is* strength and power that will sing itself to the surface in the most distressing of circumstances.

From the announcement of the angels that Christmas night on a Judean hillside of "Good tidings of great joy," to the Last Supper's promise of the fullness of joy because of His conquering death, the Resurrection is all about joy.

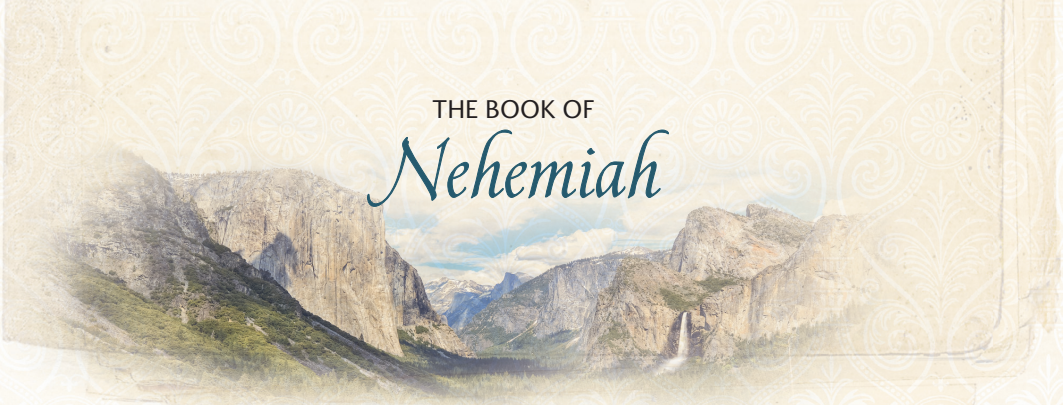
This joy is the subject of a thousand songs. It's the mystery that is no victim of circumstances. It is the courage of martyrs, the power of the timid, and the driving force of those who make a difference in a cynical old world.

Barney Warren's words continue to help us express it:

It is joy unspeakable and full of glory . . .
Oh, the half has never yet been told.

THE BOOK OF

Nehemiah



Nehemiah Prays for His People

1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.

It came to pass in the month of Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan[a] the citadel, 2that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."

4So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

5And I said: "I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, *You* who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with those who love You[a] and observe Your[b] commandments, 6please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. 7We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. 8Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, '*If* you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations;[a] 9but *if* you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, *yet* I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.'[a] 10Now these *are* Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. 11O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

For I was the king's cupbearer.

Nehemiah Sent to Judah

2 And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, *when* wine *was* before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. 2Therefore the king said to me, "Why *is* your face sad, since you *are* not sick? This *is* nothing but sorrow of heart."

So I became dreadfully afraid, 3and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, *lies* waste, and its gates are burned with fire?"

4Then the king said to me, "What do you request?"

So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."

6Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

7Furthermore I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors *of the region* beyond the River,[a] that they must permit me to

1:1 [a]Or *Susa* **1:5** [a]Literally *Him* [b]Literally *His* **1:8** [a]Leviticus 26:33 **1:9** [a]Deuteronomy 30:2–5 **2:7** [a]That is, the Euphrates, and so elsewhere in this book

pass through till I come to Judah, [8]and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which *pertains* to the temple,[a] for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy." And the king granted *them* to me according to the good hand of my God upon me.

[9]Then I went to the governors *in the region* beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. [10]When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official[a] heard *of it,* they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.

Nehemiah Views the Wall of Jerusalem

[11]So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. [12]Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode. [13]And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire. [14]Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but *there was* no room for the animal under me to pass. [15]So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. [16]And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work.

[17]Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lies* waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach." [18]And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me.

So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to *this* good *work.*

[19]But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard *of it,* they laughed at us and despised us, and said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?"

[20]So I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem."

Rebuilding the Wall

3 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests and built the Sheep Gate; they consecrated it and hung its doors. They built as far as the Tower of the Hundred,[a] *and* consecrated it, then as far as the Tower of Hananel. [2]Next to *Eliashib*[a] the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

[3]Also the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. [4]And next to them Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz,[a] made repairs. Next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs. Next to them Zadok the son of Baana made repairs. [5]Next to them the Tekoites made repairs; but their nobles did not put their shoulders[a] to the work of their Lord.

[6]Moreover Jehoiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors, with its bolts and bars. [7]And next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, repaired the residence[a] of the governor *of the region* beyond the River. [8]Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs. Also next to him Hananiah, one[a] of the perfumers, made repairs; and they fortified Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. [9]And next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, leader of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs. [10]Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph made repairs in front of his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabniah made repairs.

[11]Malchijah the son of Harim and Hashub the son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section, as well as the Tower of the

2:8 [a]Literally *house* **2:10** [a]Literally *servant,* and so elsewhere in this book **3:1** [a]Hebrew *Hammeah,* also at 12:39 **3:2** [a]Literally *On his hand* **3:4** [a]Or *Hakkoz* **3:5** [a]Literally *necks* **3:7** [a]Literally *throne* **3:8** [a]Literally *the son*

Ovens. [12]And next to him was Shallum the son of Hallohesh, leader of half the district of Jerusalem; he and his daughters made repairs.

[13]Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and *repaired* a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Refuse Gate.

[14]Malchijah the son of Rechab, leader of the district of Beth Haccerem, repaired the Refuse Gate; he built it and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

[15]Shallun the son of Col-Hozeh, leader of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he built it, covered it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired the wall of the Pool of Shelah by the King's Garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. [16]After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, leader of half the district of Beth Zur, made repairs as far as *the place* in front of the tombs[a] of David, to the man-made pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty.

[17]After him the Levites, *under* Rehum the son of Bani, made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, leader of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district. [18]After him their brethren, *under* Bavai[a] the son of Henadad, leader of the *other* half of the district of Keilah, made repairs. [19]And next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, the leader of Mizpah, repaired another section in front of the Ascent to the Armory at the buttress. [20]After him Baruch the son of Zabbai[a] carefully repaired the other section, from the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. [21]After him Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz,[a] repaired another section, from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib.

[22]And after him the priests, the men of the plain, made repairs. [23]After him Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs opposite their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs by his house. [24]After him Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the buttress, even as far as the corner. [25]Palal the son of Uzai *made repairs* opposite the buttress, and on the tower which projects from the king's upper house that *was* by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh *made repairs.*

[26]Moreover the Nethinim who dwelt in Ophel *made repairs* as far as *the place* in front of the Water Gate toward the east, and on the projecting tower. [27]After them the Tekoites repaired another section, next to the great projecting tower, and as far as the wall of Ophel.

[28]Beyond the Horse Gate the priests made repairs, each in front of his *own* house. [29]After them Zadok the son of Immer made repairs in front of his *own* house. After him Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, made repairs. [30]After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah made repairs in front of his dwelling. [31]After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants, in front of the Miphkad[a] Gate, and as far as the upper room at the corner. [32]And between the upper room at the corner, as far as the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs.

The Wall Defended Against Enemies

4 But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. [2]And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—*stones* that are burned?"

[3]Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up *on it,* he will break down their stone wall."

[4]Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! [5]Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before

3:16 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *tomb.* **3:18** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Syriac read *Binnui* (compare verse 24). **3:20** [a]A few Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Zaccai.* **3:21** [a]Or *Hakkoz*
3:31 [a]Literally *Inspection* or *Recruiting*



You; for they have provoked *You* to anger before the builders.

[6]So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its *height,* for the people had a mind to work.

[7]Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, [8]and all of them conspired together to come *and* attack Jerusalem and create confusion. [9]Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

[10]Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and *there is* so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall."

[11]And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease."

[12]So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, "From whatever place you turn, *they will be* upon us."

[13]Therefore I positioned *men* behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. [14]And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."

[15]And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and *that* God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work. [16]So it was, from that time on, *that* half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and *wore* armor; and the leaders *were* behind all the house of Judah. [17]Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. [18]Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet *was* beside me.

[19]Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, "The work *is* great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall. [20]Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

[21]So we labored in the work, and half of *the men*[a] held the spears from daybreak until the stars appeared. [22]At the same time I also said to the people, "Let each man and his servant stay at night in Jerusalem, that they may be our guard by night and a working party by day." [23]So neither I, my brethren, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me took off our clothes, *except* that everyone took them off for washing.

Nehemiah Deals with Oppression

5 And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their Jewish brethren. [2]For there were those who said, "We, our sons, and our daughters *are* many; therefore let us get grain, that we may eat and live."

[3]There were also *some* who said, "We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine."

[4]There were also those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax *on* our lands and vineyards. [5]Yet now our flesh *is* as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and *some* of our daughters have been brought into slavery. *It is* not in our power *to redeem them,* for other men have our lands and vineyards."

[6]And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. [7]After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, "Each of you is exacting usury from his brother." So I called a great assembly against them. [8]And I said to them, "According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us?"

Then they were silenced and found nothing *to say.* [9]Then I said, "What you are doing *is* not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach

4:21 [a]Literally *them*

of the nations, our enemies? [10]I also, *with* my brethren and my servants, am lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop this usury! [11]Restore now to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth of the money and the grain, the new wine and the oil, that you have charged them."

[12]So they said, "We will restore *it,* and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say."

Then I called the priests, and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. [13]Then I shook out the fold of my garment[a] and said, "So may God shake out each man from his house, and from his property, who does not perform this promise. Even thus may he be shaken out and emptied."

And all the assembly said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise.

The Generosity of Nehemiah

[14]Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions. [15]But the former governors who *were* before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God. [16]Indeed, I also continued the work on this wall, and we[a] did not buy any land. All my servants *were* gathered there for the work.

[17]And at my table *were* one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. [18]Now *that* which was prepared daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in spite of this I did not demand the governor's provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people.

[19]Remember me, my God, for good, *according to* all that I have done for this people.

Conspiracy Against Nehemiah

6 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and *that* there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), [2]that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.

[3]So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

[4]But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.

[5]Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. [6]In it *was* written:

> It is reported among the nations,
> and Geshem[a] says, *that* you and
> the Jews plan to rebel; therefore,
> according to these rumors, you are
> rebuilding the wall, that you may
> be their king. [7]And you have also
> appointed prophets to proclaim
> concerning you at Jerusalem, saying,
> "*There is* a king in Judah!" Now these

5:13 [a]Literally *my lap* **5:16** [a]Following Masoretic Text; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *I.* **6:6** [a]Hebrew *Gashmu*



matters will be reported to the king.
So come, therefore, and let us consult together.

[8]Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart."

[9]For they all *were trying to* make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done."

Now therefore, *O God,* strengthen my hands.

[10]Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who *was* a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you."

[11]And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who *is there* such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!" [12]Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced *this* prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. [13]For this reason he *was* hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so *that* they might have *cause* for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

[14]My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.

The Wall Completed

[15]So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth *day* of Elul, in fifty-two days. [16]And it happened, when all our enemies heard *of it,* and all the nations around us saw *these things,* that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

[17]Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and *the letters of* Tobiah came to them. [18]For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. [19]Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

7 Then it was, when the wall was built and I had hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, [2]that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he *was* a faithful man and feared God more than many.

[3]And I said to them, "Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand *guard,* let them shut and bar the doors; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house."

The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem

[4]Now the city *was* large and spacious, but the people in it *were* few, and the houses *were* not rebuilt. [5]Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people, that they might be registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first *return,* and found written in it:

6 These[a] *are* the people of the province
who came back from the captivity,
of those who had been carried away,
whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of
Babylon had carried away, and who
returned to Jerusalem and Judah,
everyone to his city.

7 Those who came with Zerubbabel
were Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan,
Mispereth,[a] Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah.

The number of the men of the
people of Israel: [8]the sons of Parosh,
two thousand one hundred and
seventy-two;
[9]the sons of Shephatiah, three
hundred and seventy-two;
[10]the sons of Arah, six hundred and
fifty-two;
[11]the sons of Pahath-Moab, of the
sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand
eight hundred and eighteen;
[12]the sons of Elam, one thousand two
hundred and fifty-four;

7:6 [a]Compare verses 6–72 with Ezra 2:1–70 **7:7** [a]Spelled *Mispar* in Ezra 2:2

13 the sons of Zattu, eight hundred
and forty-five;
14 the sons of Zaccai, seven hundred
and sixty;
15 the sons of Binnui,[a] six hundred and
forty-eight;
16 the sons of Bebai, six hundred and
twenty-eight;
17 the sons of Azgad, two thousand
three hundred and twenty-two;
18 the sons of Adonikam, six hundred
and sixty-seven;
19 the sons of Bigvai, two thousand and
sixty-seven;
20 the sons of Adin, six hundred and
fifty-five;
21 the sons of Ater of Hezekiah,
ninety-eight;
22 the sons of Hashum, three hundred
and twenty-eight;
23 the sons of Bezai, three hundred
and twenty-four;
24 the sons of Hariph,[a] one hundred
and twelve;
25 the sons of Gibeon,[a] ninety-five;
26 the men of Bethlehem and Netophah,
one hundred and eighty-eight;
27 the men of Anathoth, one hundred
and twenty-eight;
28 the men of Beth Azmaveth,[a] forty-two;
29 the men of Kirjath Jearim, Chephirah,
and Beeroth, seven hundred and
forty-three;
30 the men of Ramah and Geba, six
hundred and twenty-one;
31 the men of Michmas, one hundred
and twenty-two;
32 the men of Bethel and Ai, one
hundred and twenty-three;
33 the men of the other Nebo, fifty-two;
34 the sons of the other Elam, one
thousand two hundred and fifty-four;
35 the sons of Harim, three hundred
and twenty;
36 the sons of Jericho, three hundred
and forty-five;
37 the sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono,
seven hundred and twenty-one;
38 the sons of Senaah, three thousand
nine hundred and thirty.

39 The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, of
the house of Jeshua, nine hundred
and seventy-three;
40 the sons of Immer, one thousand
and fifty-two;
41 the sons of Pashhur, one thousand
two hundred and forty-seven;
42 the sons of Harim, one thousand
and seventeen.

43 The Levites: the sons of Jeshua,
of Kadmiel,
and of the sons of Hodevah,[a]
seventy-four.

44 The singers: the sons of Asaph, one
hundred and forty-eight.

45 The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum,
the sons of Ater,
the sons of Talmon,
the sons of Akkub,
the sons of Hatita,
the sons of Shobai, one hundred and
thirty-eight.

46 The Nethinim: the sons of Ziha,
the sons of Hasupha,
the sons of Tabbaoth,
47 the sons of Keros,
the sons of Sia,[a]
the sons of Padon,
48 the sons of Lebana,[a]
the sons of Hagaba,[b]
the sons of Salmai,[c]
49 the sons of Hanan,
the sons of Giddel,
the sons of Gahar,
50 the sons of Reaiah,
the sons of Rezin,
the sons of Nekoda,
51 the sons of Gazzam,
the sons of Uzza,
the sons of Paseah,
52 the sons of Besai,
the sons of Meunim,
the sons of Nephishesim,[a]
53 the sons of Bakbuk,
the sons of Hakupha,
the sons of Harhur,
54 the sons of Bazlith,[a]

7:15 [a]Spelled *Bani* in Ezra 2:10 **7:24** [a]Called *Jorah* in Ezra 2:18
7:25 [a]Called *Gibbar* in Ezra 2:20 **7:28** [a]Called *Azmaveth* in Ezra 2:24
7:43 [a]Spelled *Hodaviah* in Ezra 2:40 **7:47** [a]Spelled *Siaha* in Ezra 2:44
7:48 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Lebanah.* [b]Masoretic Text reads *Hogabah.*
[c]Or *Shalmai,* or *Shamlai* **7:52** [a]Spelled *Nephusim* in Ezra 2:50
7:54 [a]Spelled *Bazluth* in Ezra 2:52

the sons of Mehida,
the sons of Harsha,
55 the sons of Barkos,
the sons of Sisera,
the sons of Tamah,
56 the sons of Neziah,
and the sons of Hatipha.

57 The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai,
the sons of Sophereth,
the sons of Perida,[a]
58 the sons of Jaala,
the sons of Darkon,
the sons of Giddel,
59 the sons of Shephatiah,
the sons of Hattil,
the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim,
and the sons of Amon.[a]
60 All the Nethinim, and the sons of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred and ninety-two.

61 And these *were* the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addon,[a] and Immer, but they could not identify their father's house nor their lineage, whether they *were* of Israel: 62 the sons of Delaiah,
the sons of Tobiah,
the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and forty-two;
63 and of the priests: the sons of Habaiah,
the sons of Koz,[a]
the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name.
64 These sought their listing *among* those who were registered by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled. 65 And the governor[a] said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.

66 Altogether the whole assembly *was* forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, 67 besides their male and female servants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five men and

7:57 [a]Spelled *Peruda* in Ezra 2:55 **7:59** [a]Spelled *Ami* in Ezra 2:57
7:61 [a]Spelled *Addan* in Ezra 2:59 **7:63** [a]Or *Hakkoz*
7:65 [a]Hebrew *Tirshatha*



SUSAN JACKSON • Homecoming Artist, *Karen Peck and New River*

Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our LORD. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." | NEHEMIAH 8:10

As a child growing up, I simply adored my dad. I was always with him. I liked sports, fishing, camping, and anything he liked. I was a daddy's girl. Years later, Dad was so excited when we started Karen Peck and New River. He even took an early retirement to help with the group. He loved working our product table. Although he didn't talk much, when he did talk, you would listen. He was a man of his word and had a good name. He was a great Christian man.

women singers. [68]Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, [69]*their* camels four hundred and thirty-five, *and* donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

[70] And some of the heads of the fathers' *houses* gave to the work. The governor[a] gave to the treasury one thousand gold drachmas, fifty basins, and five hundred and thirty priestly garments. [71]Some of the heads of the fathers' *houses* gave to the treasury of the work twenty thousand gold drachmas, and two thousand two hundred silver minas. [72]And that which the rest of the people gave *was* twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments.

[73]So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, *some* of the people, the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities.

Ezra Reads the Law

When the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

8 Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. [2]So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who *could* hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. [3]Then he read from it in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law.

[4]So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, *and* Meshullam. [5]And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was *standing* above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. [6]And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God.

Then all the people answered, "Amen,

7:70 [a]Hebrew *Tirshatha*

Dad was fifty-nine years old when we found out that he had cancer. We had no time to process the shocking news. He passed away one month later. We were so devastated. Our world was turned upside down. I had never felt a hurt like that before. I couldn't believe that my daddy was gone; I could not even call him anymore. I had so much anger, hurt, and bitterness, and my heart felt like it had been shattered into a million pieces. I just could not believe this was happening. I did not want to talk about his death. I wanted this to all go away.

During this time, I really had to pray and ask God to help me deal with the devastation that I was feeling. I think that grief is a process that we have to work through. At times when I was at my lowest, when the joys I once knew seemed to be fading away, I clung to God's Word. Nehemiah 8:10 renewed my strength, hope, and joy. "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." I miss my dad so much, but I have the hope, through Jesus Christ, that I will see him again.

Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people *stood* in their place. 8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

9 And Nehemiah, who *was* the governor,[a] Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day *is* holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

10 Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this* day *is* holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

11 So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day *is* holy; do not be grieved." 12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.

The Feast of Tabernacles

13 Now on the second day the heads of the fathers' *houses* of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law. 14 And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, 15 and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as *it is* written."

16 Then the people went out and brought *them* and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. 17 So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness. 18 Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *there was* a sacred assembly, according to the *prescribed* manner.

The People Confess Their Sins

9 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads.[a] 2 Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. 3 And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God *for one*-fourth of the day; and *for another* fourth they confessed and worshiped the LORD their God.

4 Then Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani stood on the stairs of the Levites and cried out with a loud voice to the LORD their God. 5 And the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said:

"Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God
Forever and ever!

"Blessed be Your glorious name,
Which is exalted above all blessing
and praise!
6 You alone *are* the LORD;
You have made heaven,
The heaven of heavens, with all
their host,
The earth and everything on it,
The seas and all that is in them,
And You preserve them all.
The host of heaven worships You.

7 "You *are* the LORD God,
Who chose Abram,
And brought him out of Ur of the
Chaldeans,
And gave him the name Abraham;

8:9 [a]Hebrew *Tirshatha* **9:1** [a]Literally *earth on them*

8 You found his heart faithful before You,
And made a covenant with him
To give the land of the Canaanites,
The Hittites, the Amorites,
The Perizzites, the Jebusites,
And the Girgashites—
To give *it* to his descendants.
You have performed Your words,
For You *are* righteous.

9 "You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt,
And heard their cry by the Red Sea.
10 You showed signs and wonders against Pharaoh,
Against all his servants,
And against all the people of his land.
For You knew that they acted proudly against them.
So You made a name for Yourself, as *it is* this day.
11 And You divided the sea before them,
So that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land;
And their persecutors You threw into the deep,
As a stone into the mighty waters.
12 Moreover You led them by day with a cloudy pillar,
And by night with a pillar of fire,
To give them light on the road
Which they should travel.

13 "You came down also on Mount Sinai,
And spoke with them from heaven,
And gave them just ordinances and true laws,
Good statutes and commandments.
14 You made known to them Your holy Sabbath,
And commanded them precepts, statutes and laws,
By the hand of Moses Your servant.
15 You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger,
And brought them water out of the rock for their thirst,
And told them to go in to possess the land
Which You had sworn to give them.

16 "But they and our fathers acted proudly,
Hardened their necks,
And did not heed Your commandments.
17 They refused to obey,
And they were not mindful of Your wonders
That You did among them.
But they hardened their necks,
And in their rebellion[a]
They appointed a leader
To return to their bondage.
But You *are* God,
Ready to pardon,
Gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger,
Abundant in kindness,
And did not forsake them.

18 "Even when they made a molded calf for themselves,
And said, 'This *is* your god
That brought you up out of Egypt,'
And worked great provocations,
19 Yet in Your manifold mercies
You did not forsake them in the wilderness.
The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day,
To lead them on the road;
Nor the pillar of fire by night,
To show them light,
And the way they should go.
20 You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them,
And did not withhold Your manna from their mouth,
And gave them water for their thirst.
21 Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness;
They lacked nothing;
Their clothes did not wear out[a]
And their feet did not swell.

22 "Moreover You gave them kingdoms and nations,
And divided them into districts.[a]
So they took possession of the land of Sihon,
The land of[b] the king of Heshbon,
And the land of Og king of Bashan.
23 You also multiplied their children as the stars of heaven,

9:17 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *in Egypt*.
9:21 [a]Compare Deuteronomy 29:5 **9:22** [a]Literally *corners* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint omits *The land of*.

And brought them into the land
Which You had told their fathers
To go in and possess.
24 So the people went in
And possessed the land;
You subdued before them the
inhabitants of the land,
The Canaanites,
And gave them into their hands,
With their kings
And the people of the land,
That they might do with them as they
wished.
25 And they took strong cities and a rich
land,
And possessed houses full of all goods,
Cisterns *already* dug, vineyards, olive
groves,
And fruit trees in abundance.
So they ate and were filled and grew fat,
And delighted themselves in Your
great goodness.

26 "Nevertheless they were disobedient
And rebelled against You,
Cast Your law behind their backs
And killed Your prophets, who testified
against them
To turn them to Yourself;
And they worked great provocations.
27 Therefore You delivered them into the
hand of their enemies,
Who oppressed them;
And in the time of their trouble,
When they cried to You,
You heard from heaven;
And according to Your abundant
mercies
You gave them deliverers who saved
them
From the hand of their enemies.

28 "But after they had rest,
They again did evil before You.
Therefore You left them in the hand of
their enemies,
So that they had dominion over them;
Yet when they returned and cried out
to You,
You heard from heaven;
And many times You delivered them
according to Your mercies,
29 And testified against them,
That You might bring them back to
Your law.
Yet they acted proudly,
And did not heed Your
commandments,
But sinned against Your judgments,
'Which if a man does, he shall live by
them.'[a]
And they shrugged their shoulders,
Stiffened their necks,
And would not hear.
30 Yet for many years You had patience
with them,
And testified against them by Your
Spirit in Your prophets.
Yet they would not listen;
Therefore You gave them into the hand
of the peoples of the lands.
31 Nevertheless in Your great mercy
You did not utterly consume them nor
forsake them;
For You *are* God, gracious and merciful.

The arts and the sciences do have a place in the Christian life—they are not peripheral. For a Christian, redeemed by the work of Christ and living within the norms of Scripture and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Lordship of Christ should include an interest in the arts.

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER

32 "Now therefore, our God,
The great, the mighty, and awesome God,
Who keeps covenant and mercy:
Do not let all the trouble seem small
before You
That has come upon us,
Our kings and our princes,
Our priests and our prophets,
Our fathers and on all Your people,
From the days of the kings of Assyria
until this day.
33 However You *are* just in all that has
befallen us;
For You have dealt faithfully,
But we have done wickedly.

9:29 [a]Leviticus 18:5

34 Neither our kings nor our princes,
Our priests nor our fathers,
Have kept Your law,
Nor heeded Your commandments and
Your testimonies,
With which You testified against them.
35 For they have not served You in their
kingdom,
Or in the many good *things* that You
gave them,
Or in the large and rich land which
You set before them;
Nor did they turn from their wicked
works.

36 "Here we *are,* servants today!
And the land that You gave to our
fathers,
To eat its fruit and its bounty,
Here we *are,* servants in it!
37 And it yields much increase to the kings
You have set over us,
Because of our sins;
Also they have dominion over our
bodies and our cattle
At their pleasure;
And we *are* in great distress.

38 "And because of all this,
We make a sure *covenant* and write *it;*
Our leaders, our Levites, *and* our
priests seal *it*."

The People Who Sealed the Covenant

10 Now those who placed *their* seal on *the document were:*

Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah, 2Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, 3Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, 4Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, 5Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, 6Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, 7Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, 8Maaziah, Bilgai, *and* Shemaiah. These *were* the priests.

9The Levites: Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, *and* Kadmiel.

10Their brethren: Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, 11Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah, 12Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, 13Hodijah, Bani, *and* Beninu.

14The leaders of the people: Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, 15Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, 16Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, 17Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, 18Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, 19Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, 20Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, 21Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, 22Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, 23Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, 24Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, 25Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, 26Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, 27Malluch, Harim, *and* Baanah.

The Covenant That Was Sealed

28Now the rest of the people—the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding—29these joined with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes: 30We would not give our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons; 31*if* the peoples of the land brought wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day; and we would forego the seventh year's *produce* and the exacting of every debt.

32Also we made ordinances for ourselves, to exact from ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: 33for the showbread, for the regular grain offering, for the regular burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the set feasts; for the holy things, for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God. 34We cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for bringing the wood offering into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at the appointed times year by year, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God as *it is* written in the Law.

35And *we made ordinances* to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, to the house of the LORD; 36to bring the firstborn of our sons and our cattle, as *it is* written in the Law, and the firstborn of our herds and our flocks, to the house of our God, to the

priests who minister in the house of our God; [37]to bring the firstfruits of our dough, our offerings, the fruit from all kinds of trees, *the* new wine and oil, to the priests, to the storerooms of the house of our God; and to bring the tithes of our land to the Levites, for the Levites should receive the tithes in all our farming communities. [38]And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse.

[39]For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the grain, of the new wine and the oil, to the storerooms where the articles of the sanctuary *are, where* the priests who minister and the gatekeepers and the singers *are;* and we will not neglect the house of our God.

The People Dwelling in Jerusalem

11 Now the leaders of the people dwelt at Jerusalem; the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city, and nine-tenths *were to dwell* in *other* cities. [2]And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

[3]These *are* the heads of the province who dwelt in Jerusalem. (But in the cities of Judah everyone dwelt in his own possession in their cities—Israelites, priests, Levites, Nethinim, and descendants of Solomon's servants.) [4]Also in Jerusalem dwelt *some* of the children of Judah and of the children of Benjamin.

The children of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, of the children of Perez; [5]and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-Hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni. [6]All the sons of Perez who dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred and sixty-eight valiant men.

[7]And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jeshaiah; [8]and after him Gabbai *and* Sallai, nine hundred and twenty-eight. [9]Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer, and Judah the son of Senuah[a] *was* second over the city.

[10]Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, and Jachin; [11]Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the leader of the house of God. [12]Their brethren who did the work of the house *were* eight hundred and twenty-two; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, [13]and his brethren, heads of the fathers' *houses, were* two hundred and forty-two; and Amashai the son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, [14]and their brethren, mighty men of valor, *were* one hundred and twenty-eight. Their overseer *was* Zabdiel the son of *one of* the great men.[a]

[15]Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; [16]Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the heads of the Levites, *had* the oversight of the business outside of the house of God; [17]Mattaniah the son of Micha,[a] the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, the leader *who* began the thanksgiving with prayer; Bakbukiah, the second among his brethren; and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. [18]All the Levites in the holy city *were* two hundred and eighty-four.

[19]Moreover the gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren who kept the gates, *were* one hundred and seventy-two.

[20]And the rest of Israel, of the priests *and* Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, everyone in his inheritance. [21]But the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel. And Ziha and Gishpa *were* over the Nethinim.

[22]Also the overseer of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha, of the sons of Asaph, the singers in charge of the service of the house of God. [23]For *it was* the king's command concerning them that a certain portion should be for the singers, a quota day by day. [24]Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, *was* the king's deputy[a] in all matters concerning the people.

11:9 [a]Or *Hassenuah* **11:14** [a]Or *the son of Haggedolim*
11:17 [a]Or *Michah* **11:24** [a]Literally *at the king's hand*

The People Dwelling Outside Jerusalem

25 And as for the villages with their fields,
some of the children of Judah dwelt in Kirjath
Arba and its villages, Dibon and its vil-
lages, Jekabzeel and its villages; 26 in Jeshua,
Moladah, Beth Pelet, 27 Hazar Shual, and
Beersheba and its villages; 28 in Ziklag and
Meconah and its villages; 29 in En Rimmon,
Zorah, Jarmuth, 30 Zanoah, Adullam, and
their villages; in Lachish and its fields; in
Azekah and its villages. They dwelt from
Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

31 Also the children of Benjamin from
Geba *dwelt* in Michmash, Aija, and Bethel,
and their villages; 32 in Anathoth, Nob,
Ananiah; 33 in Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim;
34 in Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat; 35 in Lod,
Ono, *and* the Valley of Craftsmen. 36 Some
of the Judean divisions of Levites *were* in
Benjamin.

The Priests and Levites

12 Now these *are* the priests and the
Levites who came up with Zerubbabel
the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah,
Jeremiah, Ezra, 2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,
3 Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, 4 Iddo,
Ginnethoi,[a] Abijah, 5 Mijamin, Maadiah,
Bilgah, 6 Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, 7 Sallu,
Amok, Hilkiah, *and* Jedaiah.

These *were* the heads of the priests and
their brethren in the days of Jeshua.

8 Moreover the Levites *were* Jeshua,
Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, *and*
Mattaniah *who led* the thanksgiving *psalms,*
he and his brethren. 9 Also Bakbukiah and
Unni, their brethren, *stood* across from
them in *their* duties.

10 Jeshua begot Joiakim, Joiakim begot
Eliashib, Eliashib begot Joiada, 11 Joiada
begot Jonathan, and Jonathan begot Jaddua.

12 Now in the days of Joiakim, the
priests, the heads of the fathers' *houses*
were: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah,
Hananiah; 13 of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah,
Jehohanan; 14 of Melichu,[a] Jonathan; of
Shebaniah,[b] Joseph; 15 of Harim,[a] Adna; of
Meraioth,[b] Helkai; 16 of Iddo, Zechariah; of
Ginnethon, Meshullam; 17 of Abijah, Zichri;
the son of Minjamin;[a] of Moadiah,[b] Piltai; 18 of
Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan;
19 of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; 20 of
Sallai,[a] Kallai; of Amok, Eber; 21 of Hilkiah,
Hashabiah; *and* of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

22 During the reign of Darius the
Persian, a record *was also kept* of the
Levites and priests *who had been* heads of
their fathers' *houses* in the days of Eliashib,
Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua. 23 The sons of
Levi, the heads of the fathers' *houses* until
the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib,
were written in the book of the chronicles.

24 And the heads of the Levites *were*
Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the
son of Kadmiel, with their brothers across
from them, to praise *and* give thanks,
group alternating with group, accord-
ing to the command of David the man of
God. 25 Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah,
Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub *were*
gatekeepers keeping the watch at the store-
rooms of the gates. 26 These *lived* in the days
of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of
Jozadak,[a] and in the days of Nehemiah the
governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings and singing, with cymbals and stringed instruments and harps.

NEHEMIAH 12:27

Nehemiah Dedicates the Wall

27 Now at the dedication of the wall of
Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in
all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem
to celebrate the dedication with glad-
ness, both with thanksgivings and singing,
with cymbals and stringed instruments
and harps. 28 And the sons of the singers
gathered together from the countryside
around Jerusalem, from the villages of the
Netophathites, 29 from the house of Gilgal,
and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth;

12:4 [a]Or *Ginnethon* (compare verse 16) **12:14** [a]Or *Malluch* (compare verse 2) [b]Or *Shechaniah* (compare verse 3) **12:15** [a]Or *Rehum* (compare verse 3) [b]Or *Meremoth* (compare verse 3) **12:17** [a]Or *Mijamin* (compare verse 5) [b]Or *Maadiah* (compare verse 5) **12:20** [a]Or *Sallu* (compare verse 7) **12:26** [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14

for the singers had built themselves villages all around Jerusalem. 30Then the priests and Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, the gates, and the wall.

31So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. *One* went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse Gate. 32After them went Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah, 33and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, 35and some of the priests' sons with trumpets—Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, 36and his brethren, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, *and* Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe *went* before them. 37By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as the Water Gate eastward.

38The other thanksgiving choir went the opposite *way,* and I *was* behind them with half of the people on the wall, going past the Tower of the Ovens as far as the Broad Wall, 39and above the Gate of Ephraim, above the Old Gate, above the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they stopped by the Gate of the Prison.

For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chiefs of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God.

NEHEMIAH 12:46

40So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me; 41and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Minjamin,[a] Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, *and* Hananiah, with trumpets; 42also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers sang loudly with Jezrahiah the director.

43Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.

Temple Responsibilities

44And at the same time some were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse for the offerings, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions specified by the Law for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who ministered. 45Both the singers and the gatekeepers kept the charge of their God and the charge of the purification, according to the command of David *and* Solomon his son. 46For in the days of David and Asaph of old *there were* chiefs of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. 47In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah all Israel gave the portions for the singers and the gatekeepers, a portion for each day. They also consecrated *holy things* for the Levites, and the Levites consecrated *them* for the children of Aaron.

Principles of Separation

13 On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people, and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the assembly of God, 2because they had not met the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. However, our God turned the curse into a blessing. 3So it was, when they had heard the Law, that they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.

The Reforms of Nehemiah

4Now before this, Eliashib the priest, having authority over the storerooms of the house of our God, *was* allied with Tobiah. 5And he had prepared for him a large room, where previously they had stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, the tithes of grain, the new wine and oil, which were commanded *to be given* to the Levites and singers and gatekeepers, and the offerings for the priests. 6But during all this I was

12:41 [a]Or *Mijamin* (compare verse 5)

not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Then after certain days I obtained leave from the king, 7and I came to Jerusalem and discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, in preparing a room for him in the courts of the house of God. 8And it grieved me bitterly; therefore I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room. 9Then I commanded them to cleanse the rooms; and I brought back into them the articles of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.

10I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given *them;* for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field. 11So I contended with the rulers, and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their place. 12Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse. 13And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouse Shelemiah the priest and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah; and next to them *was* Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were considered faithful, and their task *was* to distribute to their brethren.

14Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for its services!

15In those days I saw *people* in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all *kinds of* burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned *them* about the day on which they were selling provisions. 16Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold *them* on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

17Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing *is* this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? 18Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

19So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted *some* of my servants at the gates, *so that* no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice.

21Then I warned them, and said to them, "Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do *so* again, I will lay hands on you!" From that time on they came no *more* on the Sabbath. 22And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day.

Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!

23In those days I also saw Jews *who* had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, *and* Moab. 24And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people.

25So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, *saying,* "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. 26Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. 27Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?"

28And *one* of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, *was* a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me.

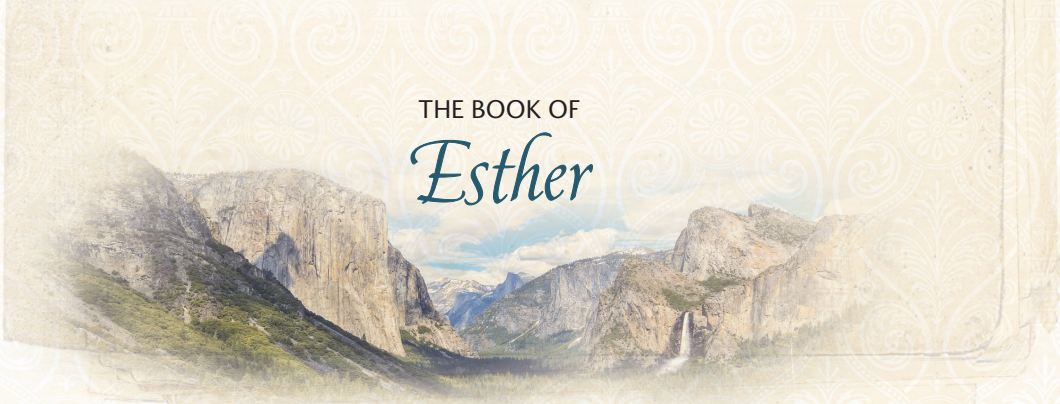
29Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

30Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service, 31and *to bringing* the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed times.

Remember me, O my God, for good!

THE BOOK OF

Esther



The King Dethrones Queen Vashti

1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus[a] (this *was* the Ahasuerus who
reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven
provinces, from India to Ethiopia), 2in those
days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne
of his kingdom, which *was* in Shushan[a] the
citadel, 3*that* in the third year of his reign
he made a feast for all his officials and
servants—the powers of Persia and Media,
the nobles, and the princes of the provinces *being* before him— 4when he showed
the riches of his glorious kingdom and the
splendor of his excellent majesty for many
days, one hundred and eighty days *in all*.

5And when these days were completed,
the king made a feast lasting seven days for
all the people who were present in Shushan
the citadel, from great to small, in the court
of the garden of the king's palace. 6*There
were* white and blue linen *curtains* fastened
with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods and marble pillars; *and the* couches
were of gold and silver on a *mosaic* pavement
of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black
marble. 7And they served drinks in golden
vessels, each vessel being different from
the other, with royal wine in abundance,
according to the generosity of the king. 8In
accordance with the law, the drinking was
not compulsory; for so the king had ordered
all the officers of his household, that they
should do according to each man's pleasure.

9Queen Vashti also made a feast for the
women *in* the royal palace which *belonged*
to King Ahasuerus.

10On the seventh day, when the heart
of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona,
Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven
eunuchs who served in the presence of
King Ahasuerus, 11to bring Queen Vashti
before the king, *wearing* her royal crown,
in order to show her beauty to the people
and the officials, for she *was* beautiful to
behold. 12But Queen Vashti refused to
come at the king's command *brought* by *his*
eunuchs; therefore the king was furious,
and his anger burned within him.

13Then the king said to the wise men who
understood the times (for this *was* the king's
manner toward all who knew law and justice, 14those closest to him *being* Carshena,
Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres,
Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes
of Persia and Media, who had access to the
king's presence, *and* who ranked highest in
the kingdom): 15"What *shall we* do to Queen
Vashti, according to law, because she did
not obey the command of King Ahasuerus
brought to her by the eunuchs?"

16And Memucan answered before the
king and the princes: "Queen Vashti has
not only wronged the king, but also all
the princes, and all the people who *are* in
all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. 17For
the queen's behavior will become known to
all women, so that they will despise their
husbands in their eyes, when they report,
'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti
to be brought in before him, but she did
not come.' 18This very day the *noble* ladies
of Persia and Media will say to all the king's
officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus *there will be* excessive
contempt and wrath. 19If it pleases the king,
let a royal decree go out from him, and let
it be recorded in the laws of the Persians
and the Medes, so that it will not be altered,
that Vashti shall come no more before King
Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal
position to another who is better than
she. 20When the king's decree which he
will make is proclaimed throughout all his

1:1 [a]Generally identified with Xerxes I (485–464 B.C.)
1:2 [a]Or *Susa*, and so throughout this book

empire (for it is great), all wives will honor their husbands, both great and small."

[21]And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan. [22]Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people.

Esther Becomes Queen

2 After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her. [2]Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king; [3]and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai[a] the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given *them.* [4]Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti."

This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

[5]In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name *was* Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. [6]*Kish*[a] had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah[b] king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. [7]And *Mordecai* had brought up Hadassah, that *is,* Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman *was* lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

[8]So it was, when the king's command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, *under* the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women. [9]Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best *place* in the house of the women.

[10]Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal *it.* [11]And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women's quarters, to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her.

[12]Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. [13]Thus *prepared, each* young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace. [14]In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name.

[15]Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her. [16]So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which *is* the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. [17]The king loved Esther more than all the *other* women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. [18]Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king.

Mordecai Discovers a Plot

[19]When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the

2:3 [a]Hebrew *Hege* **2:6** [a]Literally *Who* [b]Same as *Jehoiachin,* 2 Kings 24:6 and elsewhere

king's gate. [20]*Now* Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him.

[21]In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. [22]So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. [23]And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

Haman's Conspiracy Against the Jews

3 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who *were* with him. [2]And all the king's servants who *were* within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage. [3]Then the king's servants who *were* within the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" [4]Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told *it* to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for *Mordecai* had told them that he *was* a Jew. [5]When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. [6]But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who *were* throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.

[7]In the first month, which is the month



TORI TAFF • *Homecoming Magazine* Feature Writer, Songwriter, Wife of Russ Taff

Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's." | ESTHER 3:8

When I was just a wet-behind-the-ears newlywed, many of my friends were young mothers. As I sat and listened to them commiserate with each other about potty training and food allergies, the conversation often turned to how hard it was to raise godly children in the middle of an ungodly world. I remember (self-righteously) thinking that they all seemed just a wee bit overprotective and old-fashioned. "Children need to be exposed to the real world," I silently harrumphed to myself. "They can't grow up in some kind of Christian bubble!"

Then I had kids.

Believe me, before they were even out of diapers I would have paid big money for a nice, safe Christian bubble to raise them in! As they grew older, I became increasingly aware of the fact that without prayer and perseverance,

of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that *is,* the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month,[a] until *it fell on the* twelfth *month,*[b] which *is* the month of Adar.

[8]Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws *are* different from all *other* people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it *is* not fitting for the king to let them remain. [9]If it pleases the king, let *a decree* be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring *it* into the king's treasuries."

[10]So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. [11]And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people *are* given to you, to do with them as seems good to you."

[12]Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and *a decree* was written according to all that Haman commanded—to the king's satraps, to the governors who *were* over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring. [13]And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions.[a] [14]A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province, being published

3:7 [a]Septuagint adds *to destroy the people of Mordecai in one day;* Vulgate adds *the nation of the Jews should be destroyed.* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *and the lot fell on the fourteenth of the month.* **3:13** [a]Septuagint adds the text of the letter here.

the siren song of the world around them had the potential to drown out the still, small voice of the God inside them.

In the story of Esther, God's people had assimilated themselves so deeply into the pagan culture of Persia that their own faith and identity had almost completely disappeared. It seemed wiser to try to inconspicuously fit in than to draw attention to themselves by practicing an unpopular religion. Even Esther's beloved Uncle Mordecai insisted that she hide the fact that she was a Jew, perhaps hoping that would increase her chances of being chosen by the king. Maybe she could help the Jewish people without anyone ever finding out she was one of them.

Ironically, it was Mordecai himself who ended up spilling the beans! When the law of the land required him to kneel down and pay honor to Haman, his Jewish soul rose up inside of him and he refused. He may have been a resident of Persia, but on that day Mordecai publicly claimed his real identity as a follower of the one true God.

We all face situations in our lives when we have to decide if we are going to speak up for what we believe, or just duck our heads and go with the flow. But the truth is, God never intended for His people to seamlessly blend into this world. We honor Him most when we stand up and stand out.

for all people, that they should be ready for that day. 15The couriers went out, hastened by the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan the citadel. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

Esther Agrees to Help the Jews

4 When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. 2He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one *might* enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. 3And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept *them.* 5Then Esther called Hathach, *one* of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this *was.* 6So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that *was* in front of the king's gate. 7And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews. 8He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. 9So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

10Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: 11"All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, *he has* but one law: put *all* to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days." 12So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

13And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 14For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?"

15Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai: 16"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which *is* against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

17So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.[a]

Esther's Banquet

5 Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on *her* royal *robes* and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house.[a] 2So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, *that* she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that *was* in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.

3And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What *is* your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!"

4So Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

5Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6At the banquet of wine the king said to Esther, "What *is* your petition? It shall be granted you. What *is* your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

7Then Esther answered and said, "My

4:17 [a]Septuagint adds a prayer of Mordecai here. **5:1** [a]Septuagint adds many extra details in verses 1 and 2.

petition and request *is this:* [8]If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

Haman's Plot Against Mordecai

[9]So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai. [10]Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh. [11]Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.

[12]Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king. [13]Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

[14]Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet."

And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.

The King Honors Mordecai

6 That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. [2]And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. [3]Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?"

And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

[4]So the king said, "Who *is* in the court?" Now Haman had *just* entered the outer court of the king's palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

[5]The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court."

And the king said, "Let him come in."

[6]So Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" [7]And Haman answered the king, "*For* the man whom the king delights to honor, [8]let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. [9]Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!'"

[10]Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken."

[11]So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

[12]Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. [13]When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

[14]While they *were* still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Haman Hanged Instead of Mordecai

7 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther. [2]And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, "What *is* your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And

what *is* your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

3Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. 4For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king's loss."

5So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?"

6And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman!"

So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

7Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine *and went* into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. 8When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther *was*. Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I *am* in the house?"

As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. 9Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman."

Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"

10So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided.

Esther Saves the Jews

8 On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he *was related* to her. 2So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite, and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews. 4And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king, 5and said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing *seems* right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who *are* in all the king's provinces. 6For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?"

7Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he *tried to* lay his hand on the Jews. 8You yourselves write *a decree* concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal *it* with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."

9So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which *is* the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third *day;* and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces *in all,* to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language. 10And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed *it* with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds.[a]

11By these letters the king permitted the Jews who *were* in every city to gather together and protect their lives—to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, *both* little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, 12on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month,

8:10 [a]Literally *sons of the swift horses*

which *is* the month of Adar.[a] [13]A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. [14]The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel.

The lips know only shallow tunes. The heart is where great symphonies are born.

CALVIN MILLER

[15]So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. [16]The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor. [17]And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

The Jews Destroy Their Tormentors

9 Now in the twelfth month, that *is,* the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, *the time* came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them. [2]The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people. [3]And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. [4]For Mordecai *was* great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent. [5]Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them.

[6]And in Shushan the citadel the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. [7]Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, [8]Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, [9]Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha— [10]the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews—they killed; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

[11]On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the citadel was brought to the king. [12]And the king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what *is* your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what *is* your further request? It shall be done."

[13]Then Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who *are* in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."

[14]So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

[15]And the Jews who *were* in Shushan gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

[16]The remainder of the Jews in the king's provinces gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder. [17]*This was* on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. And on the fourteenth of *the month*[a] they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

The Feast of Purim

[18]But the Jews who *were* at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth *day,* as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of *the month*[a] they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. [19]Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwalled towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar *with*

8:12 [a]Septuagint adds the text of the letter here. **9:17** [a]Literally *it.*
9:18 [a]Literally *it.*

gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another.

20And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who *were* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, 21to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, 22as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor. 23So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them, 24because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and had cast Pur (that *is,* the lot), to consume them and destroy them; 25but when *Esther*[a] came before the king, he commanded by letter that this[b] wicked plot which *Haman* had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26So they called these days Purim, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them, 27the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written *instructions* and according to the *prescribed* time, 28*that* these days *should be* remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail *to be observed* among the Jews, and *that* the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.

29Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim. 30And *Mordecai* sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* words of peace and truth, 31to confirm these days of Purim at their *appointed* time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting. 32So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.

Mordecai's Advancement

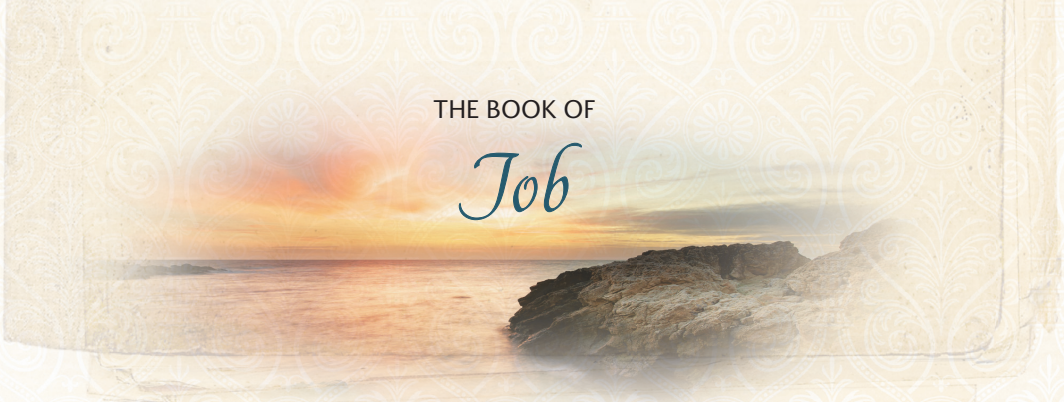
10 And King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and *on* the islands of the sea. 2Now all the acts of his power and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? 3For Mordecai the Jew *was* second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen.[a]

9:25 [a]Literally *she* or *it* [b]Literally *his* **10:3** [a]Literally *seed.* Septuagint and Vulgate add a dream of Mordecai here; Vulgate adds six more chapters.



THE BOOK OF

Job



Job and His Family in Uz

1 There was a man in the land of Uz,
whose name *was* Job; and that man was
blameless and upright, and one who feared
God and shunned evil. [2]And seven sons and
three daughters were born to him. [3]Also,
his possessions were seven thousand sheep,
three thousand camels, five hundred yoke
of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a
very large household, so that this man was
the greatest of all the people of the East.

[4]And his sons would go and feast *in
their* houses, each on his *appointed* day, and
would send and invite their three sisters to
eat and drink with them. [5]So it was, when
the days of feasting had run their course,
that Job would send and sanctify them,
and he would rise early in the morning
and offer burnt offerings *according to* the
number of them all. For Job said, "It may be
that my sons have sinned and cursed[a] God
in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly.

Satan Attacks Job's Character

[6]Now there was a day when the sons of
God came to present themselves before
the LORD, and Satan[a] also came among
them. [7]And the LORD said to Satan, "From
where do you come?"

So Satan answered the LORD and said,
"From going to and fro on the earth, and
from walking back and forth on it."

[8]Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have
you considered My servant Job, that *there
is* none like him on the earth, a blameless
and upright man, one who fears God and
shuns evil?"

[9]So Satan answered the LORD and said,
"Does Job fear God for nothing? [10]Have
You not made a hedge around him, around
his household, and around all that he has
on every side? You have blessed the work
of his hands, and his possessions have
increased in the land. [11]But now, stretch
out Your hand and touch all that he has,
and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

[12]And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold,
all that he has *is* in your power; only do not
lay a hand on his *person*."

So Satan went out from the presence of
the LORD.

Job Loses His Property and Children

[13]Now there was a day when his sons and
daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in
their oldest brother's house; [14]and a mes-
senger came to Job and said, "The oxen were
plowing and the donkeys feeding beside
them, [15]when the Sabeans[a] raided *them* and
took them away—indeed they have killed
the servants with the edge of the sword; and
I alone have escaped to tell you!"

[16]While he *was* still speaking, another
also came and said, "The fire of God fell
from heaven and burned up the sheep and
the servants, and consumed them; and I
alone have escaped to tell you!"

[17]While he *was* still speaking, another
also came and said, "The Chaldeans
formed three bands, raided the camels
and took them away, yes, and killed the
servants with the edge of the sword; and I
alone have escaped to tell you!"

[18]While he *was* still speaking, another
also came and said, "Your sons and daugh-
ters *were* eating and drinking wine in their
oldest brother's house, [19]and suddenly a
great wind came from across[a] the wilderness
and struck the four corners of the house,
and it fell on the young people, and they are
dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

[20]Then Job arose, tore his robe, and
shaved his head; and he fell to the ground
and worshiped. [21]And he said:

1:5 [a]Literally *blessed,* but used here in the evil sense, and so in verse 11 and 2:5, 9 **1:6** [a]Literally *the Adversary,* and so throughout this book **1:15** [a]Literally *Sheba* (compare 6:19) **1:19** [a]Septuagint omits *across.*

"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
And naked shall I return there.
The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the LORD."

22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Satan Attacks Job's Health

2 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?"

Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

3 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

4 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

6 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he *is* in your hand, but spare his life."

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.

9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job's Three Friends

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite,



BILL GAITHER

Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong. | JOB 1:20–22

We live in a culture where we are taught all about winning, yet much of our lives are spent dealing with loss in one way or another—the loss of our youth, loss of relationships, loss of finances, loss of health, loss through death—the list could go on and on. Incidentally, the tools for dealing with loss aren't nearly as plentiful as the tools for learning to win and succeed.

If our faith is based on winning all the time, we eventually run into big trouble. A belief system that insists Christ's will for our lives will never involve loss will inevitably break down at some point, and then what? Loss is part of living in a fallen world. That is a reality.



and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. [12]And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. [13]So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

Job Deplores His Birth

3 After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*. [2]And Job spoke, and said:

[3] "May the day perish on which I was born,
And the night *in which* it was said,
'A male child is conceived.'
[4] May that day be darkness;
May God above not seek it,
Nor the light shine upon it.
[5] May darkness and the shadow of death claim it;
May a cloud settle on it;
May the blackness of the day terrify it.
[6] *As for* that night, may darkness seize it;
May it not rejoice[a] among the days of the year,
May it not come into the number of the months.
[7] Oh, may that night be barren!
May no joyful shout come into it!
[8] May those curse it who curse the day,
Those who are ready to arouse Leviathan.
[9] May the stars of its morning be dark;
May it look for light, but *have* none,
And not see the dawning of the day;
[10] Because it did not shut up the doors of my *mother's* womb,
Nor hide sorrow from my eyes.

[11] "Why did I not die at birth?
Why did I *not* perish when I came from the womb?
[12] Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?
[13] For now I would have lain still and been quiet,

3:6 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *be joined*.

Here is the beautiful thing about loss: it drives us to trust! Loss, however difficult, moves us to a place where we must depend on Christ at a level we could never otherwise understand. Allowing Him to walk with us through difficult times will inevitably change our perspective, shifting our focus from temporary things to the eternal.

There is one particular line of the poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling that offers an interesting perspective on winning and losing: "If you can meet with triumph and disaster, and treat those two impostors just the same." Both triumph (great wins) and disaster (great losses) are not the norm. Most of life is somewhere in between.

I've lost some of the most precious people in my life during the past decade. And it has been hard. But to quote one of my favorite gospel poets, Andraé Crouch, "Through it all . . . I've learned to trust in Jesus." I wish life could be all about winning and gaining. But, in truth, my life is far richer for having learned to lean on Him more heavily than I ever thought I would have to.

I would have been asleep;
Then I would have been at rest
14 With kings and counselors of the earth,
Who built ruins for themselves,
15 Or with princes who had gold,
Who filled their houses *with* silver;
16 Or *why* was I not hidden like a stillborn child,
Like infants who never saw light?
17 There the wicked cease *from* troubling,
And there the weary are at rest.
18 *There* the prisoners rest together;
They do not hear the voice of the oppressor.
19 The small and great are there,
And the servant *is* free from his master.

20 "Why is light given to him who is in misery,
And life to the bitter of soul,
21 Who long for death, but it does not *come,*
And search for it more than hidden treasures;
22 Who rejoice exceedingly,
And are glad when they can find the grave?
23 *Why is light given* to a man whose way is hidden,
And whom God has hedged in?
24 For my sighing comes before I eat,[a]
And my groanings pour out like water.
25 For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me,
And what I dreaded has happened to me.
26 I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
I have no rest, for trouble comes."

Eliphaz: Job Has Sinned

4 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "If one attempts a word with you, will you become weary?
But who can withhold himself from speaking?
3 Surely you have instructed many,
And you have strengthened weak hands.
4 Your words have upheld him who was stumbling,
And you have strengthened the feeble knees;
5 But now it comes upon you, and you are weary;
It touches you, and you are troubled.
6 *Is* not your reverence your confidence?
And the integrity of your ways your hope?

7 "Remember now, who *ever* perished being innocent?
Or where were the upright *ever* cut off?
8 Even as I have seen,
Those who plow iniquity
And sow trouble reap the same.
9 By the blast of God they perish,
And by the breath of His anger they are consumed.
10 The roaring of the lion,
The voice of the fierce lion,
And the teeth of the young lions are broken.
11 The old lion perishes for lack of prey,
And the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

12 "Now a word was secretly brought to me,
And my ear received a whisper of it.
13 In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falls on men,
14 Fear came upon me, and trembling,
Which made all my bones shake.
15 Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair on my body stood up.
16 It stood still,
But I could not discern its appearance.
A form *was* before my eyes;
There was silence;
Then I heard a voice *saying:*
17 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker?
18 If He puts no trust in His servants,
If He charges His angels with error,
19 How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Who are crushed before a moth?
20 They are broken in pieces from morning till evening;
They perish forever, with no one regarding.

3:24 [a]Literally *my bread*

21 Does not their own excellence go away?
They die, even without wisdom.'

Eliphaz: Job Is Chastened by God

5 "Call out now;
Is there anyone who will answer you?
And to which of the holy ones will you turn?
2 For wrath kills a foolish man,
And envy slays a simple one.
3 I have seen the foolish taking root,
But suddenly I cursed his dwelling place.
4 His sons are far from safety,
They are crushed in the gate,
And *there is* no deliverer.
5 Because the hungry eat up his harvest,
Taking it even from the thorns,[a]
And a snare snatches their substance.[b]
6 For affliction does not come from the dust,
Nor does trouble spring from the ground;
7 Yet man is born to trouble,
As the sparks fly upward.

8 "But as for me, I would seek God,
And to God I would commit my cause—
9 Who does great things, and unsearchable,
Marvelous things without number.
10 He gives rain on the earth,
And sends waters on the fields.
11 He sets on high those who are lowly,
And those who mourn are lifted to safety.
12 He frustrates the devices of the crafty,
So that their hands cannot carry out their plans.
13 He catches the wise in their own craftiness,
And the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them.
14 They meet with darkness in the daytime,
And grope at noontime as in the night.
15 But He saves the needy from the sword,
From the mouth of the mighty,
And from their hand.
16 So the poor have hope,
And injustice shuts her mouth.

17 "Behold, happy *is* the man whom God corrects;
Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.
18 For He bruises, but He binds up;
He wounds, but His hands make whole.
19 He shall deliver you in six troubles,
Yes, in seven no evil shall touch you.
20 In famine He shall redeem you from death,
And in war from the power of the sword.
21 You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue,
And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes.
22 You shall laugh at destruction and famine,
And you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
23 For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field,
And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.
24 You shall know that your tent *is* in peace;
You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss.
25 You shall also know that your descendants *shall be* many,
And your offspring like the grass of the earth.
26 You shall come to the grave at a full age,
As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.
27 Behold, this we have searched out;
It *is* true.
Hear it, and know for yourself."

Job: My Complaint Is Just

6 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Oh, that my grief were fully weighed,
And my calamity laid with it on the scales!
3 For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea—
Therefore my words have been rash.
4 For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me;
My spirit drinks in their poison;
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.

5:5 [a]Septuagint reads *They shall not be taken from evil men;* Vulgate reads *And the armed man shall take him by violence.* [b]Septuagint reads *The might shall draw them off;* Vulgate reads *And the thirsty shall drink up their riches.*

5 Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass,
Or does the ox low over its fodder?
6 Can flavorless food be eaten without salt?
Or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?
7 My soul refuses to touch them;
They *are* as loathsome food to me.

8 "Oh, that I might have my request,
That God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!
9 That it would please God to crush me,
That He would loose His hand and cut me off!
10 Then I would still have comfort;
Though in anguish I would exult,
He will not spare;
For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

11 "What strength do I have, that I should hope?
And what *is* my end, that I should prolong my life?
12 *Is* my strength the strength of stones?
Or is my flesh bronze?
13 *Is* my help not within me?
And is success driven from me?

14 "To him who is afflicted, kindness *should be shown* by his friend,
Even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.
15 My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook,
Like the streams of the brooks that pass away,
16 Which are dark because of the ice,
And into which the snow vanishes.
17 When it is warm, they cease to flow;
When it is hot, they vanish from their place.
18 The paths of their way turn aside,
They go nowhere and perish.
19 The caravans of Tema look,
The travelers of Sheba hope for them.
20 They are disappointed because they were confident;
They come there and are confused.
21 For now you are nothing,
You see terror and are afraid.
22 Did I ever say, 'Bring *something* to me'?
Or, 'Offer a bribe for me from your wealth'?
23 Or, 'Deliver me from the enemy's hand'?
Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of oppressors'?

24 "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue;
Cause me to understand wherein I have erred.
25 How forceful are right words!
But what does your arguing prove?
26 Do you intend to rebuke *my* words,
And the speeches of a desperate one, *which are* as wind?
27 Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless,
And you undermine your friend.
28 Now therefore, be pleased to look at me;
For I would never lie to your face.
29 Yield now, let there be no injustice!
Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands!
30 Is there injustice on my tongue?
Cannot my taste discern the unsavory?

Job: My Suffering Is Comfortless

7 "*Is there* not a time of hard service for man on earth?
Are not his days also like the days of a hired man?
2 Like a servant who earnestly desires the shade,
And like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages,
3 So I have been allotted months of futility,
And wearisome nights have been appointed to me.



4 When I lie down, I say, 'When shall
I arise,
And the night be ended?'
For I have had my fill of tossing till dawn.
5 My flesh is caked with worms and dust,
My skin is cracked and breaks out afresh.

6 "My days are swifter than a weaver's
shuttle,
And are spent without hope.
7 Oh, remember that my life *is* a breath!
My eye will never again see good.
8 The eye of him who sees me will see
me no *more;*
While your eyes *are* upon me, I shall no
longer *be*.
9 *As* the cloud disappears and vanishes
away,
So he who goes down to the grave does
not come up.
10 He shall never return to his house,
Nor shall his place know him anymore.

11 "Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of
my soul.
12 *Am* I a sea, or a sea serpent,
That You set a guard over me?
13 When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,
My couch will ease my complaint,'
14 Then You scare me with dreams
And terrify me with visions,
15 So that my soul chooses strangling
And death rather than my body.[a]
16 I loathe *my life;*
I would not live forever.
Let me alone,
For my days *are but* a breath.

17 "What *is* man, that You should exalt him,
That You should set Your heart on him,
18 That You should visit him every
morning,
And test him every moment?
19 How long?
Will You not look away from me,
And let me alone till I swallow my saliva?
20 Have I sinned?
What have I done to You, O watcher
of men?
Why have You set me as Your target,
So that I am a burden to myself?[a]
21 Why then do You not pardon my
transgression,
And take away my iniquity?
For now I will lie down in the dust,
And You will seek me diligently,
But I *will* no longer *be*."

Bildad: Job Should Repent

8 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 "How long will you speak these *things,*
And the words of your mouth *be like* a
strong wind?
3 Does God subvert judgment?
Or does the Almighty pervert justice?
4 If your sons have sinned against Him,
He has cast them away for their
transgression.
5 If you would earnestly seek God
And make your supplication to the
Almighty,
6 If you *were* pure and upright,
Surely now He would awake for you,
And prosper your rightful dwelling
place.
7 Though your beginning was small,
Yet your latter end would increase
abundantly.

8 "For inquire, please, of the former age,
And consider the things discovered by
their fathers;
9 For we *were born* yesterday, and know
nothing,
Because our days on earth *are* a shadow.
10 Will they not teach you and tell you,
And utter words from their heart?

11 "Can the papyrus grow up without
a marsh?
Can the reeds flourish without water?
12 While it *is* yet green *and* not cut down,
It withers before any *other* plant.
13 So *are* the paths of all who forget God;
And the hope of the hypocrite shall
perish,
14 Whose confidence shall be cut off,
And whose trust *is* a spider's web.
15 He leans on his house, but it does
not stand.

7:15 [a]Literally *my bones* **7:20** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Jewish tradition read *to You.*

He holds it fast, but it does not
endure.
16 He grows green in the sun,
And his branches spread out in his
garden.
17 His roots wrap around the rock heap,
And look for a place in the stones.
18 If he is destroyed from his place,
Then *it* will deny him, *saying,* 'I have
not seen you.'

19 "Behold, this is the joy of His way,
And out of the earth others will grow.
20 Behold, God will not cast away the
blameless,
Nor will He uphold the evildoers.
21 He will yet fill your mouth with
laughing,
And your lips with rejoicing.
22 Those who hate you will be clothed
with shame,
And the dwelling place of the wicked
will come to nothing."[a]

Job: There Is No Mediator

9 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Truly I know *it is* so,
But how can a man be righteous
before God?
3 If one wished to contend with Him,
He could not answer Him one time out
of a thousand.
4 *God is* wise in heart and mighty in
strength.
Who has hardened *himself* against Him
and prospered?
5 He removes the mountains, and they
do not know
When He overturns them in His anger;
6 He shakes the earth out of its place,
And its pillars tremble;
7 He commands the sun, and it does not
rise;
He seals off the stars;
8 He alone spreads out the heavens,
And treads on the waves of the sea;
9 He made the Bear, Orion, and the
Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south;
10 He does great things past finding out,
Yes, wonders without number.
11 If He goes by me, I do not see *Him;*
If He moves past, I do not perceive
Him;
12 If He takes away, who can hinder Him?
Who can say to Him, 'What are You
doing?'
13 God will not withdraw His anger,
The allies of the proud[a] lie prostrate
beneath Him.

14 "How then can I answer Him,
And choose my words *to reason* with
Him?
15 For though I were righteous, I could
not answer Him;
I would beg mercy of my Judge.
16 If I called and He answered me,
I would not believe that He was
listening to my voice.
17 For He crushes me with a tempest,
And multiplies my wounds without
cause.
18 He will not allow me to catch my breath,
But fills me with bitterness.
19 If *it is a matter* of strength, indeed *He
is* strong;
And if of justice, who will appoint my
day *in court?*
20 Though I were righteous, my own
mouth would condemn me;
Though I *were* blameless, it would
prove me perverse.

21 "I am blameless, yet I do not know
myself;
I despise my life.
22 It *is* all one *thing;*
Therefore I say, 'He destroys the
blameless and the wicked.'
23 If the scourge slays suddenly,
He laughs at the plight of the innocent.
24 The earth is given into the hand of the
wicked.
He covers the faces of its judges.
If it is not *He,* who else could it be?

25 "Now my days are swifter than a runner;
They flee away, they see no good.
26 They pass by like swift ships,
Like an eagle swooping on its prey.
27 If I say, 'I will forget my complaint,
I will put off my sad face and wear a
smile,'

8:22 [a]Literally *will not be* **9:13** [a]Hebrew *rahab*

28 I am afraid of all my sufferings;
I know that You will not hold me
innocent.
29 *If* I am condemned,
Why then do I labor in vain?
30 If I wash myself with snow water,
And cleanse my hands with soap,
31 Yet You will plunge me into the pit,
And my own clothes will abhor me.

32 "For *He is* not a man, as I *am,*
That I may answer Him,
And that we should go to court
together.
33 Nor is there any mediator between us,
Who may lay his hand on us both.
34 Let Him take His rod away from me,
And do not let dread of Him terrify me.
35 *Then* I would speak and not fear Him,
But it is not so with me.

Job: I Would Plead with God

10 "My soul loathes my life;
I will give free course to my
complaint,
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
2 I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me;
Show me why You contend with me.
3 *Does it* seem good to You that You
should oppress,
That You should despise the work of
Your hands,
And smile on the counsel of the wicked?
4 Do You have eyes of flesh?
Or do You see as man sees?
5 *Are* Your days like the days of a mortal
man?
Are Your years like the days of a mighty
man,
6 That You should seek for my iniquity
And search out my sin,
7 Although You know that I am not
wicked,
And *there is* no one who can deliver
from Your hand?

8 'Your hands have made me and
fashioned me,
An intricate unity;
Yet You would destroy me.
9 Remember, I pray, that You have made
me like clay.
And will You turn me into dust again?
10 Did You not pour me out like milk,
And curdle me like cheese,
11 Clothe me with skin and flesh,
And knit me together with bones and
sinews?
12 You have granted me life and favor,
And Your care has preserved my spirit.

13 'And these *things* You have hidden in
Your heart;
I know that this *was* with You:
14 If I sin, then You mark me,
And will not acquit me of my iniquity.
15 If I am wicked, woe to me;
Even *if* I am righteous, I cannot lift up
my head.
I am full of disgrace;
See my misery!
16 If *my head* is exalted,
You hunt me like a fierce lion,
And again You show Yourself awesome
against me.
17 You renew Your witnesses against me,
And increase Your indignation
toward me;
Changes and war are *ever* with me.

18 'Why then have You brought me out
of the womb?
Oh, that I had perished and no eye
had seen me!
19 I would have been as though I had
not been.
I would have been carried from the
womb to the grave.
20 Are not my days few?
Cease! Leave me alone, that I may take
a little comfort,
21 Before I go *to the place from which* I
shall not return,
To the land of darkness and the
shadow of death,
22 A land as dark as darkness *itself,*
As the shadow of death, without
any order,
Where even the light *is* like darkness.'"

Zophar Urges Job to Repent

11 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered
and said:

2 "Should not the multitude of words be
answered?

Gospel Songs

Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.

JOB 13:15

For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

1 TIMOTHY 4:10

BY THE end of her life, Louisa Stead had served faithfully as a missionary to Africa, her husband and daughter both fellow ministers of the gospel. But the journey from her initial calling in Dover, England, to her final ministry in Zimbabwe was filled with twists and turns, orchestrated in such a way as only God can do. Louisa began feeling called to foreign missions as early as her teen years, and only had that confirmed when she traveled to America in her early twenties. Her heart was set on China, but God had other plans. Deemed too ill to travel overseas, Louisa settled down in the U.S., marrying and having a baby girl. Then a few years later, Louisa and her little family were picnicking at the beach when a young boy began to drown in the ocean. Louisa's husband rushed into the water to rescue him, but was unsuccessful and drowned, himself, all while Louisa and her little girl watched. It was *then*—when she was in the depths of her grief and pain—that Louisa Stead wrote, "Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er! Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus, oh for grace to trust Him more!"

Much like the apostle Paul, Louisa Stead learned that no matter her circumstances, she could face all things through Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:11–13). Rather than become embittered to the Lord for all of her dashed dreams and hardships, she pressed in to the Lord, knowing that He is the only safe place in the midst of life's storms. Eventually, Louisa did go overseas, but it was to Africa, not Asia, that God finally brought her. She first ministered in South Africa, where she met her second husband. Although they had to return to America because of her failing health, she again rallied and they went this time to Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe). She carried out the rest of her days there, a living testimony to her own lyrics and the most vital truth a Christian can learn: "I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee, precious Jesus, Savior, Friend. And I know that Thou art with me, wilt be with me to the end."

'Tis So Sweet

Louisa M. R. Stead, 1882

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
And to take Him at His Word;
Just to rest upon His promise,
And to know, "Thus says the Lord!"

Refrain:
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust Him more!

O how sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to trust His cleansing blood;
And in simple faith to plunge me
'Neath the healing, cleansing flood!

Refrain

Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just from sin and self to cease;
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and rest, and joy and peace.

Refrain

I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee,
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend;
And I know that Thou art with me,
Wilt be with me to the end.

And should a man full of talk be
vindicated?
3 Should your empty talk make men hold
their peace?
And when you mock, should no one
rebuke you?
4 For you have said,
'My doctrine *is* pure,
And I am clean in your eyes.'
5 But oh, that God would speak,
And open His lips against you,
6 That He would show you the secrets of
wisdom!
For *they would* double *your* prudence.
Know therefore that God exacts from
you
Less than your iniquity *deserves*.

7 "Can you search out the deep things of
God?
Can you find out the limits of the
Almighty?
8 *They are* higher than heaven— what
can you do?
Deeper than Sheol— what can you
know?
9 Their measure *is* longer than the earth
And broader than the sea.

10 "If He passes by, imprisons, and gathers
to judgment,
Then who can hinder Him?
11 For He knows deceitful men;
He sees wickedness also.
Will He not then consider *it?*
12 For an empty-headed man will be wise,
When a wild donkey's colt is born a man.

13 "If you would prepare your heart,
And stretch out your hands toward Him;
14 If iniquity *were* in your hand, *and you*
put it far away,
And would not let wickedness dwell in
your tents;
15 Then surely you could lift up your face
without spot;
Yes, you could be steadfast, and not
fear;
16 Because you would forget *your* misery,
And remember *it* as waters *that have*
passed away,
17 And *your* life would be brighter than
noonday.
Though you were dark, you would be
like the morning.
18 And you would be secure, because
there is hope;
Yes, you would dig *around you, and* take
your rest in safety.
19 You would also lie down, and no one
would make *you* afraid;
Yes, many would court your favor.
20 But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
And they shall not escape,
And their hope—loss of life!"

Job Answers His Critics

12 Then Job answered and said:

2 "No doubt you *are* the people,
And wisdom will die with you!
3 But I have understanding as well as you;
I *am* not inferior to you.
Indeed, who does not *know* such things
as these?

4 "I am one mocked by his friends,
Who called on God, and He answered
him,
The just and blameless *who is* ridiculed.
5 A lamp[a] is despised in the thought of
one who is at ease;
It is made ready for those whose feet slip.
6 The tents of robbers prosper,
And those who provoke God are
secure—
In what God provides by His hand.

7 "But now ask the beasts, and they will
teach you;
And the birds of the air, and they will
tell you;
8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach
you;
And the fish of the sea will explain to
you.
9 Who among all these does not know
That the hand of the LORD has done
this,
10 In whose hand *is* the life of every living
thing,
And the breath of all mankind?
11 Does not the ear test words
And the mouth taste its food?
12 Wisdom *is* with aged men,

12:5 [a]Or *disaster*

And with length of days,
understanding.

13 "With Him *are* wisdom and strength,
He has counsel and understanding.
14 If He breaks *a thing* down, it cannot be
rebuilt;
If He imprisons a man, there can be no
release.
15 If He withholds the waters, they dry up;
If He sends them out, they overwhelm
the earth.
16 With Him *are* strength and prudence.
The deceived and the deceiver *are* His.
17 He leads counselors away plundered,
And makes fools of the judges.
18 He loosens the bonds of kings,
And binds their waist with a belt.
19 He leads princes[a] away plundered,
And overthrows the mighty.
20 He deprives the trusted ones of speech,
And takes away the discernment of the
elders.
21 He pours contempt on princes,
And disarms the mighty.
22 He uncovers deep things out of
darkness,
And brings the shadow of death to light.
23 He makes nations great, and destroys
them;
He enlarges nations, and guides them.
24 He takes away the understanding[a]
of the chiefs of the people of the
earth,
And makes them wander in a pathless
wilderness.
25 They grope in the dark without light,
And He makes them stagger like a
drunken *man.*

13 "Behold, my eye has seen all *this,*
My ear has heard and understood it.
2 What you know, I also know;
I *am* not inferior to you.
3 But I would speak to the Almighty,
And I desire to reason with God.
4 But you forgers of lies,
You *are* all worthless physicians.
5 Oh, that you would be silent,
And it would be your wisdom!
6 Now hear my reasoning,
And heed the pleadings of my lips.
7 Will you speak wickedly for God,
And talk deceitfully for Him?
8 Will you show partiality for Him?
Will you contend for God?
9 Will it be well when He searches you
out?
Or can you mock Him as one mocks a
man?
10 He will surely rebuke you
If you secretly show partiality.
11 Will not His excellence make you
afraid,
And the dread of Him fall upon you?
12 Your platitudes *are* proverbs of ashes,
Your defenses are defenses of clay.

13 "Hold your peace with me, and let me
speak,
Then let come on me what *may!*
14 Why do I take my flesh in my teeth,
And put my life in my hands?
15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.
Even so, I will defend my own ways
before Him.
16 He also *shall* be my salvation,
For a hypocrite could not come before
Him.
17 Listen carefully to my speech,
And to my declaration with your ears.
18 See now, I have prepared *my* case,
I know that I shall be vindicated.
19 Who *is* he *who* will contend with me?
If now I hold my tongue, I perish.

Job's Despondent Prayer

20 "Only two *things* do not do to me,
Then I will not hide myself from You:
21 Withdraw Your hand far from me,
And let not the dread of You make me
afraid.
22 Then call, and I will answer;
Or let me speak, then You respond to me.
23 How many *are* my iniquities and sins?
Make me know my transgression and
my sin.
24 Why do You hide Your face,
And regard me as Your enemy?
25 Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro?
And will You pursue dry stubble?
26 For You write bitter things against me,
And make me inherit the iniquities of
my youth.
27 You put my feet in the stocks,

12:19 [a]Literally *priests,* but not in a technical sense **12:24** [a]Literally *heart*

And watch closely all my paths.
You set a limit[a] for the soles of my feet.

28 "*Man*[a] decays like a rotten thing,
Like a garment that is moth-eaten.

14 "Man *who is* born of woman
Is of few days and full of trouble.
2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away;
He flees like a shadow and does not continue.
3 And do You open Your eyes on such a one,
And bring me[a] to judgment with Yourself?
4 Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean?
No one!
5 Since his days *are* determined,
The number of his months *is* with You;
You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.
6 Look away from him that he may rest,
Till like a hired man he finishes his day.

7 "For there is hope for a tree,
If it is cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that its tender shoots will not cease.
8 Though its root may grow old in the earth,
And its stump may die in the ground,
9 *Yet* at the scent of water it will bud
And bring forth branches like a plant.
10 But man dies and is laid away;
Indeed he breathes his last
And where *is* he?
11 *As* water disappears from the sea,
And a river becomes parched and dries up,
12 So man lies down and does not rise.
Till the heavens *are* no more,
They will not awake
Nor be roused from their sleep.

13 "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave,
That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past,
That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!
14 If a man dies, shall he live *again?*
All the days of my hard service I will wait,
Till my change comes.
15 You shall call, and I will answer You;
You shall desire the work of Your hands.
16 For now You number my steps,
But do not watch over my sin.
17 My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag,
And You cover[a] my iniquity.

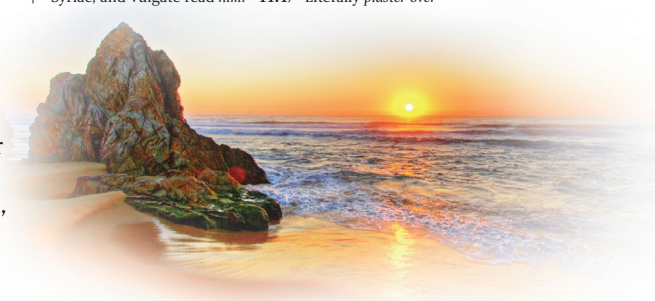
18 "But *as* a mountain falls *and* crumbles away,
And *as* a rock is moved from its place;
19 *As* water wears away stones,
And as torrents wash away the soil of the earth;
So You destroy the hope of man.
20 You prevail forever against him, and he passes on;
You change his countenance and send him away.
21 His sons come to honor, and he does not know *it;*
They are brought low, and he does not perceive *it.*
22 But his flesh will be in pain over it,
And his soul will mourn over it."

Eliphaz Accuses Job of Folly

15 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge,
And fill himself with the east wind?
3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk,
Or by speeches with which he can do no good?
4 Yes, you cast off fear,
And restrain prayer before God.

13:27 [a]Literally *inscribe a print* **13:28** [a]Literally *He* **14:3** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *him.* **14:17** [a]Literally *plaster over*



5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth,
And you choose the tongue of the crafty.
6 Your own mouth condemns you, and not I;
Yes, your own lips testify against you.

7 "*Are* you the first man *who* was born?
Or were you made before the hills?
8 Have you heard the counsel of God?
Do you limit wisdom to yourself?
9 What do you know that we do not know?
What do you understand that *is* not in us?
10 Both the gray-haired and the aged *are* among us,
Much older than your father.
11 *Are* the consolations of God too small for you,
And the word *spoken* gently[a] with you?
12 Why does your heart carry you away,
And what do your eyes wink at,
13 That you turn your spirit against God,
And let *such* words go out of your mouth?

14 "What *is* man, that he could be pure?
And *he who is* born of a woman, that he could be righteous?
15 If *God* puts no trust in His saints,
And the heavens are not pure in His sight,
16 How much less man, *who is* abominable and filthy,
Who drinks iniquity like water!

17 "I will tell you, hear me;
What I have seen I will declare,
18 What wise men have told,
Not hiding *anything received* from their fathers,
19 To whom alone the land was given,
And no alien passed among them:
20 The wicked man writhes with pain all *his* days,
And the number of years is hidden from the oppressor.
21 Dreadful sounds *are* in his ears;
In prosperity the destroyer comes upon him.
22 He does not believe that he will return from darkness,
For a sword is waiting for him.
23 He wanders about for bread, *saying*, 'Where *is it?*'
He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand.
24 Trouble and anguish make him afraid;
They overpower him, like a king ready for battle.
25 For he stretches out his hand against God,
And acts defiantly against the Almighty,
26 Running stubbornly against Him
With his strong, embossed shield.

27 "Though he has covered his face with his fatness,
And made *his* waist heavy with fat,
28 He dwells in desolate cities,
In houses which no one inhabits,
Which are destined to become ruins.
29 He will not be rich,
Nor will his wealth continue,
Nor will his possessions overspread the earth.
30 He will not depart from darkness;
The flame will dry out his branches,
And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.
31 Let him not trust in futile *things,* deceiving himself,
For futility will be his reward.
32 It will be accomplished before his time,
And his branch will not be green.
33 He will shake off his unripe grape like a vine,
And cast off his blossom like an olive tree.
34 For the company of hypocrites *will be* barren,
And fire will consume the tents of bribery.
35 They conceive trouble and bring forth futility;
Their womb prepares deceit."

Job Reproaches His Pitiless Friends

16 Then Job answered and said:
2 "I have heard many such things;
Miserable comforters *are* you all!
3 Shall words of wind have an end?
Or what provokes you that you answer?
4 I also could speak as you *do,*

15:11 [a]Septuagint reads *a secret thing.*

If your soul were in my soul's place.
I could heap up words against you,
And shake my head at you;
5 *But* I would strengthen you with my mouth,
And the comfort of my lips would relieve *your grief*.

6 "Though I speak, my grief is not relieved;
And *if* I remain silent, how am I eased?
7 But now He has worn me out;
You have made desolate all my company.
8 You have shriveled me up,
And it is a witness *against me;*
My leanness rises up against me
And bears witness to my face.
9 He tears *me* in His wrath, and hates me;
He gnashes at me with His teeth;
My adversary sharpens His gaze on me.
10 They gape at me with their mouth,
They strike me reproachfully on the cheek,
They gather together against me.
11 God has delivered me to the ungodly,
And turned me over to the hands of the wicked.
12 I was at ease, but He has shattered me;
He also has taken *me* by my neck, and shaken me to pieces;
He has set me up for His target,
13 His archers surround me.
He pierces my heart[a] and does not pity;
He pours out my gall on the ground.
14 He breaks me with wound upon wound;
He runs at me like a warrior.[a]

15 "I have sewn sackcloth over my skin,
And laid my head[a] in the dust.
16 My face is flushed from weeping,
And on my eyelids *is* the shadow of death;
17 Although no violence *is* in my hands,
And my prayer *is* pure.

18 "O earth, do not cover my blood,
And let my cry have no *resting* place!
19 Surely even now my witness *is* in heaven,
And my evidence *is* on high.
20 My friends scorn me;
My eyes pour out *tears* to God.
21 Oh, that one might plead for a man with God,
As a man *pleads* for his neighbor!
22 For when a few years are finished,
I shall go the way of no return.

Job Prays for Relief

17 "My spirit is broken,
My days are extinguished,
The grave *is ready* for me.
2 *Are* not mockers with me?
And does not my eye dwell on their provocation?

3 "Now put down a pledge for me with Yourself.
Who *is* he *who* will shake hands with me?
4 For You have hidden their heart from understanding;
Therefore You will not exalt *them.*
5 He who speaks flattery to *his* friends,
Even the eyes of his children will fail.

6 "But He has made me a byword of the people,
And I have become one in whose face men spit.
7 My eye has also grown dim because of sorrow,
And all my members *are* like shadows.
8 Upright *men* are astonished at this,
And the innocent stirs himself up against the hypocrite.
9 Yet the righteous will hold to his way,
And he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger.

10 "But please, come back again, all of you,[a]
For I shall not find *one* wise *man* among you.
11 My days are past,
My purposes are broken off,
Even the thoughts of my heart.
12 They change the night into day;
'The light *is* near,' *they say,* in the face of darkness.
13 If I wait *for* the grave *as* my house,
If I make my bed in the darkness,
14 If I say to corruption, 'You *are* my father,'
And to the worm, 'You *are* my mother and my sister,'
15 Where then *is* my hope?
As for my hope, who can see it?

16:13 [a]Literally *kidneys* **16:14** [a]Vulgate reads *giant*. **16:15** [a]Literally *horn*
17:10 [a]Following some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text and Targum read *all of them.*

16 *Will* they go down to the gates of Sheol?
Shall *we have* rest together in the dust?"

Bildad: The Wicked Are Punished

18 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 "How long *till* you put an end to words?
Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak.
3 Why are we counted as beasts,
And regarded as stupid in your sight?
4 You who tear yourself in anger,
Shall the earth be forsaken for you?
Or shall the rock be removed from its place?

5 "The light of the wicked indeed goes out,
And the flame of his fire does not shine.
6 The light is dark in his tent,
And his lamp beside him is put out.
7 The steps of his strength are shortened,
And his own counsel casts him down.
8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet,
And he walks into a snare.
9 The net takes *him* by the heel,
And a snare lays hold of him.
10 A noose *is* hidden for him on the ground,
And a trap for him in the road.
11 Terrors frighten him on every side,
And drive him to his feet.
12 His strength is starved,
And destruction *is* ready at his side.
13 It devours patches of his skin;
The firstborn of death devours his limbs.
14 He is uprooted from the shelter of his tent,
And they parade him before the king of terrors.
15 They dwell in his tent *who are* none of his;
Brimstone is scattered on his dwelling.
16 His roots are dried out below,
And his branch withers above.
17 The memory of him perishes from the earth,
And he has no name among the renowned.[a]
18 He is driven from light into darkness,
And chased out of the world.
19 He has neither son nor posterity among his people,
Nor any remaining in his dwellings.
20 Those in the west are astonished at his day,
As those in the east are frightened.
21 Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked,
And this *is* the place *of him who* does not know God."

Job Trusts in His Redeemer

19 Then Job answered and said:

2 "How long will you torment my soul,
And break me in pieces with words?
3 These ten times you have reproached me;
You are not ashamed *that* you have wronged me.[a]
4 And if indeed I have erred,
My error remains with me.
5 If indeed you exalt *yourselves* against me,
And plead my disgrace against me,
6 Know then that God has wronged me,
And has surrounded me with His net.

7 "If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not heard.
If I cry aloud, *there is* no justice.
8 He has fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass;
And He has set darkness in my paths.
9 He has stripped me of my glory,
And taken the crown *from* my head.
10 He breaks me down on every side,
And I am gone;
My hope He has uprooted like a tree.
11 He has also kindled His wrath against me,
And He counts me as *one of* His enemies.
12 His troops come together
And build up their road against me;
They encamp all around my tent.

13 "He has removed my brothers far from me,
And my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.
14 My relatives have failed,
And my close friends have forgotten me.
15 Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants,
Count me as a stranger;
I am an alien in their sight.

18:17 [a]Literally *before the outside,* meaning distinguished, famous **19:3** [a]A Jewish tradition reads *make yourselves strange to me.*

16 I call my servant, but he gives no answer;
I beg him with my mouth.
17 My breath is offensive to my wife,
And I am repulsive to the children of my own body.
18 Even young children despise me;
I arise, and they speak against me.
19 All my close friends abhor me,
And those whom I love have turned against me.
20 My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh,
And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.

21 "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends,
For the hand of God has struck me!
22 Why do you persecute me as God *does,*
And are not satisfied with my flesh?

23 "Oh, that my words were written!
Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!
24 That they were engraved on a rock
With an iron pen and lead, forever!
25 For I know *that* my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
26 And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know,*
That in my flesh I shall see God,
27 Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!
28 If you should say, 'How shall we persecute him?'—
Since the root of the matter is found in me,
29 Be afraid of the sword for yourselves;
For wrath *brings* the punishment of the sword,
That you may know *there is* a judgment."

Zophar's Sermon on the Wicked Man

20 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

2 "Therefore my anxious thoughts make me answer,
Because of the turmoil within me.
3 I have heard the rebuke that reproaches me,
And the spirit of my understanding causes me to answer.

4 "Do you *not* know this of old,
Since man was placed on earth,
5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
And the joy of the hypocrite is *but* for a moment?
6 Though his haughtiness mounts up to the heavens,
And his head reaches to the clouds,
7 *Yet* he will perish forever like his own refuse;
Those who have seen him will say,
'Where is he?'
8 He will fly away like a dream, and not be found;
Yes, he will be chased away like a vision of the night.
9 The eye *that* saw him will *see him* no more,
Nor will his place behold him anymore.
10 His children will seek the favor of the poor,
And his hands will restore his wealth.
11 His bones are full of his youthful vigor,
But it will lie down with him in the dust.

12 "Though evil is sweet in his mouth,
And he hides it under his tongue,
13 *Though* he spares it and does not forsake it,
But still keeps it in his mouth,
14 *Yet* his food in his stomach turns sour;
It becomes cobra venom within him.
15 He swallows down riches
And vomits them up again;
God casts them out of his belly.
16 He will suck the poison of cobras;
The viper's tongue will slay him.
17 He will not see the streams,
The rivers flowing with honey and cream.
18 He will restore that for which he labored,
And will not swallow *it* down;
From the proceeds of business
He will get no enjoyment.
19 For he has oppressed *and* forsaken the poor,
He has violently seized a house which he did not build.

20 "Because he knows no quietness in
his heart,[a]
He will not save anything he desires.
21 Nothing is left for him to eat;
Therefore his well-being will not last.
22 In his self-sufficiency he will be in
distress;
Every hand of misery will come
against him.
23 *When* he is about to fill his stomach,
God will cast on him the fury of His
wrath,
And will rain *it* on him while he is eating.
24 He will flee from the iron weapon;
A bronze bow will pierce him through.
25 It is drawn, and comes out of the body;
Yes, the glittering *point comes* out of
his gall.
Terrors *come* upon him;
26 Total darkness *is* reserved for his
treasures.
An unfanned fire will consume him;
It shall go ill with him who is left in
his tent.
27 The heavens will reveal his iniquity,
And the earth will rise up against him.
28 The increase of his house will depart,
And his goods will flow away in the day
of His wrath.
29 This *is* the portion from God for a
wicked man,
The heritage appointed to him by God."

Music is at its best when it is pleasingly melancholic.
CHARLES SPURGEON

Job's Discourse on the Wicked

21 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Listen carefully to my speech,
And let this be your consolation.
3 Bear with me that I may speak,
And after I have spoken, keep mocking.

4 "As for me, *is* my complaint against man?
And if *it were,* why should I not be
impatient?
5 Look at me and be astonished;
Put *your* hand over *your* mouth.
6 Even when I remember I am terrified,
And trembling takes hold of my flesh.
7 Why do the wicked live *and* become old,
Yes, become mighty in power?
8 Their descendants are established with
them in their sight,
And their offspring before their eyes.
9 Their houses *are* safe from fear,
Neither *is* the rod of God upon them.
10 Their bull breeds without failure;
Their cow calves without miscarriage.
11 They send forth their little ones like a
flock,
And their children dance.
12 They sing to the tambourine and harp,
And rejoice to the sound of the flute.
13 They spend their days in wealth,
And in a moment go down to the grave.[a]
14 Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us,
For we do not desire the knowledge of
Your ways.
15 Who *is* the Almighty, that we should
serve Him?
And what profit do we have if we pray
to Him?'
16 Indeed their prosperity *is* not in their
hand;
The counsel of the wicked is far
from me.

17 "How often is the lamp of the wicked
put out?
How often does their destruction come
upon them,
The sorrows *God* distributes in His
anger?
18 They are like straw before the wind,
And like chaff that a storm carries
away.
19 *They say,* 'God lays up one's[a] iniquity
for his children';
Let Him recompense him, that he may
know *it.*
20 Let his eyes see his destruction,
And let him drink of the wrath of the
Almighty.
21 For what does he care about his
household after him,
When the number of his months is cut
in half?

22 "Can *anyone* teach God knowledge,
Since He judges those on high?

20:20 [a]Literally *belly* **21:13** [a]Or *Sheol* **21:19** [a]Literally *his*

23 One dies in his full strength,
Being wholly at ease and secure;
24 His pails[a] are full of milk,
And the marrow of his bones is moist.
25 Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul,
Never having eaten with pleasure.
26 They lie down alike in the dust,
And worms cover them.

27 "Look, I know your thoughts,
And the schemes *with which* you would wrong me.
28 For you say,
'Where *is* the house of the prince?
And where *is* the tent,[a]
The dwelling place of the wicked?'
29 Have you not asked those who travel the road?
And do you not know their signs?
30 For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom;
They shall be brought out on the day of wrath.
31 Who condemns his way to his face?
And who repays him *for what* he has done?
32 Yet he shall be brought to the grave,
And a vigil kept over the tomb.
33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him;
Everyone shall follow him,
As countless *have gone* before him.
34 How then can you comfort me with empty words,
Since falsehood remains in your answers?"

21:24 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *bowels;* Syriac reads *sides;* Targum reads *breasts.* **21:28** [a]Vulgate omits *the tent.*



ROBERTA CROTEAU • Editor of *Homecoming Magazine*, Author

Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull breeds without failure; their cow calves without miscarriage. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They sing to the tambourine and harp, and rejoice to the sound of the flute. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. | JOB 21:9–13

Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously? JEREMIAH 12:1

No matter how old you get, how many books you read, or how enlightened you become, I am convinced there are three questions you will leave this earth asking without answer: *Why*, *why*, and *why*. I believe that because I don't believe I've ever yet seen anyone leave who had even a close guess. There have been a countless number of theories and theologies and hypotheses attempted, from the sublime to the ridiculous, but nothing that has ever really satisfied the question for anyone who has ever really asked.

I watched a friend lose a child. It was a slow, hope-drenched crawl to a finish no one could believe. I used to think I had at least some of the answers figured out. But as I watched him watch the love of his life slowly fade away and die, I ran out of any possible explanations. I barely can understand when

Eliphaz Accuses Job of Wickedness

22 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "Can a man be profitable to God,
Though he who is wise may be profitable to himself?
3 *Is it* any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous?
Or *is it* gain *to Him* that you make your ways blameless?

4 "Is it because of your fear of Him that He corrects you,
And enters into judgment with you?
5 *Is* not your wickedness great,
And your iniquity without end?
6 For you have taken pledges from your brother for no reason,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
7 You have not given the weary water to drink,
And you have withheld bread from the hungry.
8 But the mighty man possessed the land,
And the honorable man dwelt in it.
9 You have sent widows away empty,
And the strength of the fatherless was crushed.
10 Therefore snares *are* all around you,
And sudden fear troubles you,
11 Or darkness *so that* you cannot see;
And an abundance of water covers you.

12 "Is not God in the height of heaven?
And see the highest stars, how lofty they are!
13 And you say, 'What does God know?
Can He judge through the deep darkness?

someone has to say good-bye after living many of his years. What on earth could explain a tiny soul being given time that could be counted in days?

Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and writer of stunning memoirs—memoirs of his journey through belief lost and found while in a German concentration camp in World War II—admits the burden of faith in such horrific circumstances: "It seemed as impossible to conceive of Auschwitz with God as to conceive of Auschwitz without God. . . . The tragedy of the believer is much greater than the tragedy of the nonbeliever."

Holding on to faith when every shred of evidence and happenstance points to despair is even harder than our first leaps of faith. It's easy to believe when life is easy. It's easy to let go when life goes wrong. It's easy to doubt when the bombs start to fall.

The world is full of unspeakable, inexplicable horrors. The less we can explain, the more God's ways escape us. It's mind-numbing to try to reason anything through. I don't know why people have to suffer unimaginably. I don't know why the innocent suffer. I don't even really know why the guilty suffer. I don't know why bad things happen to good people—or why bad things happen at all. There is just no possible explanation.

Flannery O'Connor wrote that it was harder to believe than not to. It is. But I refuse to think it's a game or a test designed by a god bent on seeing his loved ones prove their loyalty through all the outrageous slings and arrows he can throw.

Instead I will wait. And listen. And trust that the answer will be worth every question. And that the bad will transform into something unspeakably good. That every tear will be dried, every wound will be healed. And that one day the Father of all will sit down beside us and explain it once and for all.

14 Thick clouds cover Him, so that He
cannot see,
And He walks above the circle of heaven.'
15 Will you keep to the old way
Which wicked men have trod,
16 Who were cut down before their time,
Whose foundations were swept away
by a flood?
17 They said to God, 'Depart from us!
What can the Almighty do to them?'[a]
18 Yet He filled their houses with good
things;
But the counsel of the wicked is far
from me.

19 "The righteous see *it* and are glad,
And the innocent laugh at them:
20 'Surely our adversaries[a] are cut down,
And the fire consumes their
remnant.'

21 "Now acquaint yourself with Him, and
be at peace;
Thereby good will come to you.
22 Receive, please, instruction from His
mouth,
And lay up His words in your heart.
23 If you return to the Almighty, you will
be built up;
You will remove iniquity far from your
tents.
24 Then you will lay your gold in
the dust,
And the *gold* of Ophir among the
stones of the brooks.
25 Yes, the Almighty will be your gold[a]
And your precious silver;
26 For then you will have your delight in
the Almighty,
And lift up your face to God.
27 You will make your prayer to Him,
He will hear you,
And you will pay your vows.
28 You will also declare a thing,
And it will be established for you;

22:17 [a]Septuagint and Syriac read *us*. **22:20** [a]Septuagint reads *substance*. **22:25** [a]The ancient versions suggest *defense;* Hebrew reads *gold* as in verse 24.



TANYA GOODMAN SYKES • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Daughter of Rusty Goodman, Niece of Vestal and Howard Goodman

But he knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. | JOB 23:10

Job had been through so much suffering, but I love that he says, "He knows where I'm going." So often when things go wrong, my first impulse is that God is somehow oblivious to what's happening. Even though I *know* that He is aware, it just feels like maybe He's forgotten. But not Job. He was confident that God knew right where he was—and that there was a purpose for it all. He also understood that there would be an end to his suffering and that the result would bring about a purification of his character.

Suffering isn't meant to destroy us, but to strengthen us and create a greater dependence upon God. So when the heat is on in our own lives, we must look to Him for our strength and know that there will be an end to our struggles. In the end, our trials will lead us to a beautiful victory. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Ps. 30:5).

So light will shine on your ways.
29 When they cast *you* down, and you say,
'Exaltation *will come!*'
Then He will save the humble *person.*
30 He will *even* deliver one who is not
innocent;
Yes, he will be delivered by the purity
of your hands."

Job Proclaims God's Righteous Judgments

23 Then Job answered and said:
2 "Even today my complaint is bitter;
My[a] hand is listless because of my
groaning.
3 Oh, that I knew where I might find Him,
That I might come to His seat!
4 I would present *my* case before Him,
And fill my mouth with arguments.
5 I would know the words *which* He
would answer me,
And understand what He would say
to me.
6 Would He contend with me in His
great power?
No! But He would take *note* of me.
7 There the upright could reason with
Him,
And I would be delivered forever from
my Judge.

8 "Look, I go forward, but He is not *there,*
And backward, but I cannot perceive
Him;
9 When He works on the left hand, I
cannot behold *Him;*
When He turns to the right hand, I
cannot see *Him.*
10 But He knows the way that I take;
When He has tested me, I shall come
forth as gold.
11 My foot has held fast to His steps;
I have kept His way and not turned
aside.
12 I have not departed from the
commandment of His lips;
I have treasured the words of His mouth
More than my necessary *food.*

13 "But He *is* unique, and who can make
Him change?
And *whatever* His soul desires, *that* He
does.
14 For He performs *what is* appointed
for me,
And many such *things are* with Him.
15 Therefore I am terrified at His presence;
When I consider *this,* I am afraid
of Him.
16 For God made my heart weak,
And the Almighty terrifies me;
17 Because I was not cut off from the
presence of darkness,
And He did *not* hide deep darkness
from my face.

Job Complains of Violence on the Earth

24 "*Since* times are not hidden from
the Almighty,
Why do those who know Him see not
His days?

2 "*Some* remove landmarks;
They seize flocks violently and feed
on them;
3 They drive away the donkey of the
fatherless;
They take the widow's ox as a pledge.
4 They push the needy off the road;
All the poor of the land are forced to
hide.
5 Indeed, *like* wild donkeys in the desert,
They go out to their work, searching
for food.
The wilderness *yields* food for them
and for *their* children.
6 They gather their fodder in the field
And glean in the vineyard of the wicked.
7 They spend the night naked, without
clothing,
And have no covering in the cold.
8 They are wet with the showers of the
mountains,
And huddle around the rock for want
of shelter.

9 "*Some* snatch the fatherless from the
breast,
And take a pledge from the poor.
10 They cause *the poor* to go naked,
without clothing;
And they take away the sheaves from
the hungry.
11 They press out oil within their walls,

23:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *His.*

And tread winepresses, yet suffer thirst.
12 The dying groan in the city,
And the souls of the wounded cry out;
Yet God does not charge *them* with wrong.

13 "There are those who rebel against the light;
They do not know its ways
Nor abide in its paths.
14 The murderer rises with the light;
He kills the poor and needy;
And in the night he is like a thief.
15 The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight,
Saying, 'No eye will see me';
And he disguises *his* face.
16 In the dark they break into houses
Which they marked for themselves in the daytime;
They do not know the light.
17 For the morning is the same to them as the shadow of death;
If *someone* recognizes *them,*
They are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

18 "They *should be* swift on the face of the waters,
Their portion *should be* cursed in the earth,
So that no *one would* turn into the way of their vineyards.
19 As drought and heat consume the snow waters,
So the grave[a] *consumes those who* have sinned.
20 The womb *should* forget him,
The worm *should* feed sweetly on him;
He *should* be remembered no more,
And wickedness *should* be broken like a tree.
21 For he preys on the barren *who* do not bear,
And does no good for the widow.

22 "But *God* draws the mighty away with His power;
He rises up, but no *man* is sure of life.
23 He gives them security, and they rely *on it;*
Yet His eyes *are* on their ways.
24 They are exalted for a little while,
Then they are gone.
They are brought low;
They are taken out of the way like all *others;*
They dry out like the heads of grain.

25 "Now if *it is* not *so,* who will prove me a liar,
And make my speech worth nothing?"

Bildad: How Can Man Be Righteous?

25 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 "Dominion and fear *belong* to Him;
He makes peace in His high places.
3 Is there any number to His armies?
Upon whom does His light not rise?
4 How then can man be righteous before God?
Or how can he be pure *who is* born of a woman?
5 If even the moon does not shine,
And the stars are not pure in His sight,
6 How much less man, *who is* a maggot,
And a son of man, *who is* a worm?"

Job: Man's Frailty and God's Majesty

26 But Job answered and said:

2 "How have you helped *him who is* without power?
How have you saved the arm *that has* no strength?
3 How have you counseled *one who has* no wisdom?
And *how* have you declared sound advice to many?
4 To whom have you uttered words?
And whose spirit came from you?

5 "The dead tremble,
Those under the waters and those inhabiting them.
6 Sheol *is* naked before Him,
And Destruction has no covering.
7 He stretches out the north over empty space;
He hangs the earth on nothing.
8 He binds up the water in His thick clouds,

24:19 [a]Or *Sheol*

Yet the clouds are not broken under it.
9 He covers the face of *His* throne,
And spreads His cloud over it.
10 He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters,
At the boundary of light and darkness.
11 The pillars of heaven tremble,
And are astonished at His rebuke.
12 He stirs up the sea with His power,
And by His understanding He breaks up the storm.
13 By His Spirit He adorned the heavens;
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
14 Indeed these *are* the mere edges of His ways,
And how small a whisper we hear of Him!
But the thunder of His power who can understand?"

Job Maintains His Integrity

27 Moreover Job continued his discourse, and said:

2 "*As* God lives, *who* has taken away my justice,
And the Almighty, *who* has made my soul bitter,
3 As long as my breath *is* in me,
And the breath of God in my nostrils,
4 My lips will not speak wickedness,
Nor my tongue utter deceit.
5 Far be it from me
That I should say you are right;
Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.
6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go;
My heart shall not reproach *me* as long as I live.

7 "May my enemy be like the wicked,
And he who rises up against me like the unrighteous.
8 For what is the hope of the hypocrite,
Though he may gain *much,*
If God takes away his life?
9 Will God hear his cry
When trouble comes upon him?
10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty?
Will he always call on God?

11 "I will teach you about the hand of God;
What *is* with the Almighty I will not conceal.
12 Surely all of you have seen *it;*
Why then do you behave with complete nonsense?

13 "This is the portion of a wicked man with God,
And the heritage of oppressors, received from the Almighty:
14 If his children are multiplied, *it is* for the sword;
And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.
15 Those who survive him shall be buried in death,
And their[a] widows shall not weep,
16 Though he heaps up silver like dust,
And piles up clothing like clay—
17 He may pile *it* up, but the just will wear *it,*
And the innocent will divide the silver.
18 He builds his house like a moth,[a]
Like a booth *which* a watchman makes.
19 The rich man will lie down,
But not be gathered *up;*[a]
He opens his eyes,
And he *is* no more.
20 Terrors overtake him like a flood;
A tempest steals him away in the night.
21 The east wind carries him away, and he is gone;
It sweeps him out of his place.
22 It hurls against him and does not spare;
He flees desperately from its power.
23 *Men* shall clap their hands at him,
And shall hiss him out of his place.

Job's Discourse on Wisdom

28 "Surely there is a mine for silver,
And a place *where* gold is refined.
2 Iron is taken from the earth,
And copper *is* smelted *from* ore.
3 *Man* puts an end to darkness,
And searches every recess
For ore in the darkness and the shadow of death.
4 He breaks open a shaft away from people;

27:15 [a]Literally *his* **27:18** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *spider* (compare 8:14); Targum reads *decay*.
27:19 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Syriac read *But shall not add* (that is, do it again); Vulgate reads *But take away nothing*.

In places forgotten by feet
They hang far away from men;
They swing to and fro.
5 *As for* the earth, from it comes bread,
But underneath it is turned up as by fire;
6 Its stones *are* the source of sapphires,
And it contains gold dust.
7 *That* path no bird knows,
Nor has the falcon's eye seen it.
8 The proud lions[a] have not trodden it,
Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.
9 He puts his hand on the flint;
He overturns the mountains at the roots.
10 He cuts out channels in the rocks,
And his eye sees every precious thing.
11 He dams up the streams from trickling;
What is hidden he brings forth to light.

12 "But where can wisdom be found?
And where *is* the place of understanding?
13 Man does not know its value,
Nor is it found in the land of the living.
14 The deep says, '*It is* not in me';
And the sea says, '*It is* not with me.'
15 It cannot be purchased for gold,
Nor can silver be weighed *for* its price.
16 It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir,
In precious onyx or sapphire.
17 Neither gold nor crystal can equal it,
Nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of fine gold.
18 No mention shall be made of coral or quartz,
For the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.
19 The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,
Nor can it be valued in pure gold.

20 "From where then does wisdom come?
And where *is* the place of understanding?
21 It is hidden from the eyes of all living,
And concealed from the birds of the air.
22 Destruction and Death say,
'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'
23 God understands its way,
And He knows its place.
24 For He looks to the ends of the earth,
And sees under the whole heavens,
25 To establish a weight for the wind,
And apportion the waters by measure.
26 When He made a law for the rain,
And a path for the thunderbolt,
27 Then He saw *wisdom*[a] and declared it;
He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out.
28 And to man He said,
'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom,
And to depart from evil *is* understanding.'"

The blessing of a perishing man came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
JOB 29:13

Job's Summary Defense

29 Job further continued his discourse, and said:

2 "Oh, that I were as *in* months past,
As *in* the days *when* God watched over me;
3 When His lamp shone upon my head,
And when by His light I walked *through* darkness;
4 Just as I was in the days of my prime,
When the friendly counsel of God *was* over my tent;
5 When the Almighty *was* yet with me,
When my children *were* around me;
6 When my steps were bathed with cream,[a]
And the rock poured out rivers of oil for me!

7 "When I went out to the gate by the city,
When I took my seat in the open square,
8 The young men saw me and hid,
And the aged arose *and* stood;
9 The princes refrained from talking,
And put *their* hand on their mouth;
10 The voice of nobles was hushed,
And their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth.
11 When the ear heard, then it blessed me,
And when the eye saw, then it approved me;

28:8 [a]Literally *sons of pride,* figurative of the great lions
28:27 [a]Literally *it* **29:6** [a]Masoretic Text reads *wrath;* ancient versions and some Hebrew manuscripts read *cream* (compare 20:17).

12 Because I delivered the poor who
cried out,
The fatherless and *the one who* had no
helper.
13 The blessing of a perishing *man* came
upon me,
And I caused the widow's heart to
sing for joy.
14 I put on righteousness, and it
clothed me;
My justice *was* like a robe and a turban.
15 I *was* eyes to the blind,
And I *was* feet to the lame.
16 I *was* a father to the poor,
And I searched out the case *that* I did
not know.
17 I broke the fangs of the wicked,
And plucked the victim from his teeth.

18 "Then I said, 'I shall die in my nest,
And multiply *my* days as the sand.
19 My root *is* spread out to the waters,
And the dew lies all night on my branch.
20 My glory *is* fresh within me,
And my bow is renewed in my hand.'

21 "*Men* listened to me and waited,
And kept silence for my counsel.
22 After my words they did not speak again,
And my speech settled on them *as dew.*
23 They waited for me *as* for the rain,
And they opened their mouth wide *as*
for the spring rain.
24 *If* I mocked at them, they did not
believe *it,*
And the light of my countenance they
did not cast down.
25 I chose the way for them, and sat as
chief;
So I dwelt as a king in the army,
As one *who* comforts mourners.

30 "But now they mock at me, *men*
younger than I,
Whose fathers I disdained to put with
the dogs of my flock.
2 Indeed, what *profit* is the strength of
their hands to me?
Their vigor has perished.
3 *They are* gaunt from want and famine,
Fleeing late to the wilderness, desolate
and waste,
4 Who pluck mallow by the bushes,
And broom tree roots *for* their food.
5 They were driven out from among *men,*
They shouted at them as *at* a thief.
6 *They had* to live in the clefts of the valleys,
In caves of the earth and the rocks.
7 Among the bushes they brayed,
Under the nettles they nestled.
8 *They were* sons of fools,
Yes, sons of vile men;
They were scourged from the land.

9 "And now I am their taunting song;
Yes, I am their byword.
10 They abhor me, they keep far from me;
They do not hesitate to spit in my face.
11 Because He has loosed my[a] bowstring
and afflicted me,
They have cast off restraint before me.
12 At *my* right *hand* the rabble arises;
They push away my feet,
And they raise against me their ways of
destruction.
13 They break up my path,
They promote my calamity;
They have no helper.
14 They come as broad breakers;
Under the ruinous storm they roll along.
15 Terrors are turned upon me;
They pursue my honor as the wind,
And my prosperity has passed like a
cloud.

16 "And now my soul is poured out
because of my *plight;*
The days of affliction take hold of me.
17 My bones are pierced in me at night,
And my gnawing pains take no rest.
18 By great force my garment is disfigured;
It binds me about as the collar of my
coat.
19 He has cast me into the mire,
And I have become like dust and ashes.

20 "I cry out to You, but You do not
answer me;
I stand up, and You regard me.
21 *But* You have become cruel to me;
With the strength of Your hand You
oppose me.
22 You lift me up to the wind and cause
me to ride *on it;*
You spoil my success.

30:11 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *His.*

23 For I know *that* You will bring me *to*
death,
And *to* the house appointed for all living.

24 "Surely He would not stretch out *His*
hand against a heap of ruins,
If they cry out when He destroys *it*.
25 Have I not wept for him who was in
trouble?
Has *not* my soul grieved for the poor?
26 But when I looked for good, evil came
to me;
And when I waited for light, then came
darkness.
27 My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest;
Days of affliction confront me.
28 I go about mourning, but not in the sun;
I stand up in the assembly *and* cry out
for help.
29 I am a brother of jackals,
And a companion of ostriches.
30 My skin grows black and falls from me;
My bones burn with fever.
31 My harp is *turned* to mourning,
And my flute to the voice of those who
weep.

31 "I have made a covenant with my
eyes;
Why then should I look upon a young
woman?
2 For what *is* the allotment of God from
above,
And the inheritance of the Almighty
from on high?
3 *Is* it not destruction for the wicked,
And disaster for the workers of iniquity?
4 Does He not see my ways,
And count all my steps?

5 "If I have walked with falsehood,
Or if my foot has hastened to deceit,
6 Let me be weighed on honest scales,
That God may know my integrity.
7 If my step has turned from the way,
Or my heart walked after my eyes,
Or if any spot adheres to my hands,
8 *Then* let me sow, and another eat;
Yes, let my harvest be rooted out.
9 "If my heart has been enticed by a
woman,
Or *if* I have lurked at my neighbor's
door,
10 *Then* let my wife grind for another,
And let others bow down over her.
11 For that *would be* wickedness;
Yes, it *would be* iniquity *deserving of*
judgment.
12 For that *would be* a fire *that* consumes
to destruction,
And would root out all my increase.

13 "If I have despised the cause of my male
or female servant
When they complained against me,
14 What then shall I do when God rises up?
When He punishes, how shall I answer
Him?
15 Did not He who made me in the womb
make them?
Did not the same One fashion us in
the womb?

16 "If I have kept the poor from *their* desire,
Or caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
17 Or eaten my morsel by myself,
So that the fatherless could not eat of it
18 (But from my youth I reared him as a
father,
And from my mother's womb I guided
the widow[a]);
19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of
clothing,
Or any poor *man* without covering;
20 If his heart[a] has not blessed me,
And *if* he was *not* warmed with the
fleece of my sheep;
21 If I have raised my hand against the
fatherless,
When I saw I had help in the gate;
22 *Then* let my arm fall from my shoulder,
Let my arm be torn from the socket.
23 For destruction *from* God *is* a terror
to me,
And because of His magnificence I
cannot endure.

24 "If I have made gold my hope,
Or said to fine gold, '*You are* my
confidence';
25 If I have rejoiced because my wealth
was great,
And because my hand had gained much;
26 If I have observed the sun[a] when it
shines,

31:18 [a]Literally *her* (compare verse 16) **31:20** [a]Literally *loins*
31:26 [a]Literally *light*

Or the moon moving *in* brightness,
27 So that my heart has been secretly enticed,
And my mouth has kissed my hand;
28 This also *would be* an iniquity *deserving of* judgment,
For I would have denied God *who is* above.

29 "If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me,
Or lifted myself up when evil found him
30 (Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin
By asking for a curse on his soul);
31 If the men of my tent have not said,
'Who is there that has not been satisfied with his meat?'
32 (*But* no sojourner had to lodge in the street,
For I have opened my doors to the traveler[a]);
33 If I have covered my transgressions as Adam,
By hiding my iniquity in my bosom,
34 Because I feared the great multitude,
And dreaded the contempt of families,
So that I kept silence
And did not go out of the door—
35 Oh, that I had one to hear me!
Here is my mark.
Oh, that the Almighty would answer me,
That my Prosecutor had written a book!
36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder,
And bind it on me *like* a crown;
37 I would declare to Him the number of my steps;
Like a prince I would approach Him.

38 "If my land cries out against me,
And its furrows weep together;
39 If I have eaten its fruit[a] without money,
Or caused its owners to lose their lives;
40 *Then* let thistles grow instead of wheat,
And weeds instead of barley."
The words of Job are ended.

Elihu Contradicts Job's Friends

32 So these three men ceased answering Job, because he *was* righteous in his own eyes. 2Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God. 3Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and *yet* had condemned Job.

4Now because they *were* years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job.[a] 5When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.

6So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said:

"I *am* young in years, and you *are* very old;
Therefore I was afraid,
And dared not declare my opinion to you.
7 I said, 'Age[a] should speak,
And multitude of years should teach wisdom.'
8 But *there is* a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.
9 Great men[a] are not *always* wise,
Nor do the aged *always* understand justice.

10 "Therefore I say, 'Listen to me,
I also will declare my opinion.'
11 Indeed I waited for your words,
I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say.
12 I paid close attention to you;
And surely not one of you convinced Job,
Or answered his words—
13 Lest you say,
'We have found wisdom';
God will vanquish him, not man.
14 Now he has not directed *his* words against me;
So I will not answer him with your words.

15 "They are dismayed and answer no more;
Words escape them.
16 And I have waited, because they did not speak,
Because they stood still *and* answered no more.
17 I also will answer my part,
I too will declare my opinion.
18 For I am full of words;

31:32 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *road.* **31:39** [a]Literally *its strength* **32:4** [a]Vulgate reads *till Job had spoken.* **32:7** [a]Literally *Days,* that is, years **32:9** [a]Or *Men of many years*

The spirit within me compels me.
19 Indeed my belly *is* like wine *that* has
no vent;
It is ready to burst like new wineskins.
20 I will speak, that I may find relief;
I must open my lips and answer.
21 Let me not, I pray, show partiality to
anyone;
Nor let me flatter any man.
22 For I do not know how to flatter,
Else my Maker would soon take me
away.

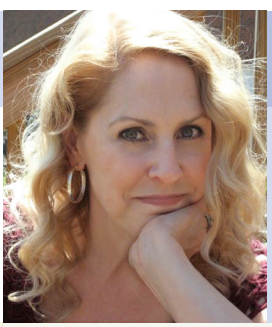
Elihu Contradicts Job

33 "But please, Job, hear my speech,
And listen to all my words.
2 Now, I open my mouth;
My tongue speaks in my mouth.
3 My words *come* from my upright heart;
My lips utter pure knowledge.
4 The Spirit of God has made me,
And the breath of the Almighty gives
me life.
5 If you can answer me,
Set *your words* in order before me;
Take your stand.
6 Truly I *am* as your spokesman[a] before
God;
I also have been formed out of clay.
7 Surely no fear of me will terrify you,
Nor will my hand be heavy on you.

8 "Surely you have spoken in my hearing,
And I have heard the sound of *your*
words, *saying*,
9 'I *am* pure, without transgression;
I *am* innocent, and *there is* no iniquity
in me.
10 Yet He finds occasions against me,
He counts me as His enemy;
11 He puts my feet in the stocks,
He watches all my paths.'

12 "Look, *in* this you are not righteous.
I will answer you,
For God is greater than man.
13 Why do you contend with Him?

33:6 [a]Literally *as your mouth*



TORI TAFF • Feature Writer for *Homecoming Magazine*, Songwriter, Wife of Russ Taff

I will speak, that I may find relief; I must open my lips and answer. | JOB 32:20

One of the things I have always admired about Job is that he never shut up.

Despite enduring unthinkable hardships, despite knowing that God Himself was allowing these things to happen, despite having so-called friends tell him it was his own fault and maybe he ought to just curse God and die . . . Job kept raising his voice.

He raised it in protest. He raised it in argument. He complained bitterly, wept copiously, and tried to reason things out with God and man. Job needed to make sense out of this horrible situation he found himself in, and he needed to do it out loud. These days we call that *processing*—and the fact that Job doggedly kept it up for forty chapters has always made him a man after my own heart.

For He does not give an accounting of
any of His words.
14 For God may speak in one way, or in
another,
Yet man does not perceive it.
15 In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falls upon men,
While slumbering on their beds,
16 Then He opens the ears of men,
And seals their instruction.
17 In order to turn man *from his* deed,
And conceal pride from man,
18 He keeps back his soul from the Pit,
And his life from perishing by the sword.

19 "*Man* is also chastened with pain on
his bed,
And with strong *pain* in many of his
bones,
20 So that his life abhors bread,
And his soul succulent food.
21 His flesh wastes away from sight,
And his bones stick out *which once*
were not seen.
22 Yes, his soul draws near the Pit,
And his life to the executioners.

23 "If there is a messenger for him,
A mediator, one among a thousand,
To show man His uprightness,
24 Then He is gracious to him, and says,
'Deliver him from going down to the Pit;
I have found a ransom';
25 His flesh shall be young like a child's,
He shall return to the days of his youth.
26 He shall pray to God, and He will
delight in him,
He shall see His face with joy,
For He restores to man His
righteousness.
27 Then he looks at men and says,
'I have sinned, and perverted *what*
was right,
And it did not profit me.'
28 He will redeem his[a] soul from going
down to the Pit,
And his[b] life shall see the light.

33:28 [a]Or *my* (Kethib) [b]Or *my* (Kethib)

Much to my husband Russ's chagrin, I come from a long line of verbal processors. My family doesn't really understand the concept of suffering in silence or celebrating in silence or doing anything in silence. I understand that it might get a little tiresome if you happen to be the person on the receiving end of this ever-flowing stream of words, but as Mark Lowry once told me, "I don't even know what I think about something until I hear me say it!" The truth is, talking things through has been a saving grace in all of the most important relationships in my life.

So when I read chapter after chapter of Job engaging in vigorous discussion with his friends and long conversations with his God, I totally get it. Job cared too much to just clam up and hope this nightmare would go away. He needed to know why this was happening to him because his understanding of a gracious God didn't include winding up covered with boils and sitting in a pile of ashes! So he kept pushing, and he kept talking. Giving up and giving in wasn't an option for him.

Never let the pain of this world silence your voice. As long as you have breath, raise your thoughts, your questions, and even your complaints to heaven. The God of the universe can take it—He loves you and longs to hear from you.

29 "Behold, God works all these *things,*
Twice, *in fact,* three *times* with a man,
30 To bring back his soul from the Pit,
That he may be enlightened with the light of life.

31 "Give ear, Job, listen to me;
Hold your peace, and I will speak.
32 If you have anything to say, answer me;
Speak, for I desire to justify you.
33 If not, listen to me;
Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom."

Elihu Proclaims God's Justice

34 Elihu further answered and said:

2 "Hear my words, you wise *men;*
Give ear to me, you who have knowledge.
3 For the ear tests words
As the palate tastes food.
4 Let us choose justice for ourselves;
Let us know among ourselves what *is* good.

5 "For Job has said, 'I am righteous,
But God has taken away my justice;
6 Should I lie concerning my right?
My wound *is* incurable, *though I am* without transgression.'
7 What man *is* like Job,
Who drinks scorn like water,
8 Who goes in company with the workers of iniquity,
And walks with wicked men?
9 For he has said, 'It profits a man nothing
That he should delight in God.'

10 "Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding:
Far be it from God *to do* wickedness,
And *from* the Almighty to *commit* iniquity.
11 For He repays man *according to* his work,
And makes man to find a reward according to *his* way.
12 Surely God will never do wickedly,
Nor will the Almighty pervert justice.
13 Who gave Him charge over the earth?
Or who appointed *Him over* the whole world?
14 If He should set His heart on it,
If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath,
15 All flesh would perish together,
And man would return to dust.

16 "If *you have* understanding, hear this;
Listen to the sound of my words:
17 Should one who hates justice govern?
Will you condemn *Him who is* most just?
18 *Is it fitting* to say to a king, '*You are* worthless,'
And to nobles, '*You are* wicked'?
19 Yet He is not partial to princes,
Nor does He regard the rich more than the poor;
For they *are* all the work of His hands.
20 In a moment they die, in the middle of the night;
The people are shaken and pass away;
The mighty are taken away without a hand.

21 "For His eyes *are* on the ways of man,
And He sees all his steps.
22 There is no darkness nor shadow of death
Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.
23 For He need not further consider a man,
That he should go before God in judgment.
24 He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry,
And sets others in their place.
25 Therefore He knows their works;
He overthrows *them* in the night,
And they are crushed.
26 He strikes them as wicked *men*
In the open sight of others,
27 Because they turned back from Him,
And would not consider any of His ways,
28 So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him;
For He hears the cry of the afflicted.
29 When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?
And when He hides *His* face, who then can see Him,

Whether *it is* against a nation or a man alone?—
30 That the hypocrite should not reign,
Lest the people be ensnared.

31 "For has *anyone* said to God,
'I have borne *chastening;*
I will offend no more;
32 Teach me *what* I do not see;
If I have done iniquity, I will do no more'?
33 Should He repay *it* according to your *terms,*
Just because you disavow it?
You must choose, and not I;
Therefore speak what you know.

34 "Men of understanding say to me,
Wise men who listen to me:
35 'Job speaks without knowledge,
His words *are* without wisdom.'
36 Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost,
Because *his* answers *are like* those of wicked men!
37 For he adds rebellion to his sin;
He claps *his hands* among us,
And multiplies his words against God."

Elihu Condemns Self-Righteousness

35 Moreover Elihu answered and said:
2 "Do you think this is right?
Do you say,
'My righteousness is more than God's'?
3 For you say,
'What advantage will it be to You?
What profit shall I have, more than *if* I had sinned?'

4 "I will answer you,
And your companions with you.
5 Look to the heavens and see;
And behold the clouds—
They are higher than you.
6 If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him?
Or, *if* your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him?
7 If you are righteous, what do you give Him?
Or what does He receive from your hand?

But no one says, "Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night?"
JOB 35:10

8 Your wickedness affects a man such as you,
And your righteousness a son of man.

9 "Because of the multitude of oppressions they cry out;
They cry out for help because of the arm of the mighty.
10 But no one says, 'Where *is* God my Maker,
Who gives songs in the night,
11 Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth,
And makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?'
12 There they cry out, but He does not answer,
Because of the pride of evil men.
13 Surely God will not listen to empty *talk,*
Nor will the Almighty regard it.
14 Although you say you do not see Him,
Yet justice *is* before Him, and you must wait for Him.
15 And now, because He has not punished in His anger,
Nor taken much notice of folly,
16 Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain;
He multiplies words without knowledge."

Elihu Proclaims God's Goodness

36 Elihu also proceeded and said:
2 "Bear with me a little, and I will show you
That *there are* yet words to speak on God's behalf.
3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar;
I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
4 For truly my words *are* not false;
One who is perfect in knowledge *is* with you.

5 "Behold, God *is* mighty, but despises *no one;*

He is mighty in strength of
understanding.
6 He does not preserve the life of the
wicked,
But gives justice to the oppressed.
7 He does not withdraw His eyes from
the righteous;
But *they are* on the throne with kings,
For He has seated them forever,
And they are exalted.
8 And if *they are* bound in fetters,
Held in the cords of affliction,
9 Then He tells them their work and
their transgressions—
That they have acted defiantly.
10 He also opens their ear to instruction,
And commands that they turn from
iniquity.
11 If they obey and serve *Him,*
They shall spend their days in
prosperity,
And their years in pleasures.

Remember to magnify His work, of which men have sung.
JOB 36:24

12 But if they do not obey,
They shall perish by the sword,
And they shall die without knowledge.[a]

13 "But the hypocrites in heart store up
wrath;
They do not cry for help when He
binds them.
14 They die in youth,
And their life *ends* among the
perverted persons.[a]
15 He delivers the poor in their affliction,
And opens their ears in oppression.
16 "Indeed He would have brought you
out of dire distress,
Into a broad place where *there is* no
restraint;
And what is set on your table *would be*
full of richness.
17 But you are filled with the judgment
due the wicked;
Judgment and justice take hold *of you.*
18 Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest He
take you away with *one* blow;
For a large ransom would not help you
avoid *it.*
19 Will your riches,
Or all the mighty forces,
Keep you from distress?
20 Do not desire the night,
When people are cut off in their place.
21 Take heed, do not turn to iniquity,
For you have chosen this rather than
affliction.

22 "Behold, God is exalted by His power;
Who teaches like Him?
23 Who has assigned Him His way,
Or who has said, 'You have done
wrong'?

Elihu Proclaims God's Majesty

24 "Remember to magnify His work,
Of which men have sung.
25 Everyone has seen it;
Man looks on *it* from afar.

26 "Behold, God *is* great, and we do not
know *Him;*
Nor can the number of His years *be*
discovered.
27 For He draws up drops of water,
Which distill as rain from the mist,

36:12 [a]Masoretic Text reads *as one without knowledge.* **36:14** [a]Hebrew *qedeshim,* that is, those practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals



28 Which the clouds drop down
And pour abundantly on man.
29 Indeed, can *anyone* understand the spreading of clouds,
The thunder from His canopy?
30 Look, He scatters His light upon it,
And covers the depths of the sea.
31 For by these He judges the peoples;
He gives food in abundance.
32 He covers *His* hands with lightning,
And commands it to strike.
33 His thunder declares it,
The cattle also, concerning the rising *storm.*

37 "At this also my heart trembles,
And leaps from its place.
2 Hear attentively the thunder of His voice,
And the rumbling *that* comes from His mouth.
3 He sends it forth under the whole heaven,
His lightning to the ends of the earth.
4 After it a voice roars;
He thunders with His majestic voice,
And He does not restrain them when His voice is heard.
5 God thunders marvelously with His voice;
He does great things which we cannot comprehend.
6 For He says to the snow, 'Fall *on* the earth';
Likewise to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength.
7 He seals the hand of every man,
That all men may know His work.
8 The beasts go into dens,
And remain in their lairs.
9 From the chamber *of the south* comes the whirlwind,
And cold from the scattering winds *of the north.*
10 By the breath of God ice is given,
And the broad waters are frozen.
11 Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds;
He scatters His bright clouds.
12 And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance,
That they may do whatever He commands them
On the face of the whole earth.[a]
13 He causes it to come,
Whether for correction,
Or for His land,
Or for mercy.

14 "Listen to this, O Job;
Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.
15 Do you know when God dispatches them,
And causes the light of His cloud to shine?
16 Do you know how the clouds are balanced,
Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?
17 Why *are* your garments hot,
When He quiets the earth by the south *wind?*
18 With Him, have you spread out the skies,
Strong as a cast metal mirror?

19 "Teach us what we should say to Him,
For we can prepare nothing because of the darkness.
20 Should He be told that I *wish to* speak?
If a man were to speak, surely he would be swallowed up.
21 Even now *men* cannot look at the light *when it is* bright in the skies,
When the wind has passed and cleared them.
22 He comes from the north *as* golden *splendor;*
With God *is* awesome majesty.
23 *As for* the Almighty, we cannot find Him;
He is excellent in power,
In judgment and abundant justice;
He does not oppress.
24 Therefore men fear Him;
He shows no partiality to any *who are* wise of heart."

The LORD Reveals His Omnipotence to Job

38 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

2 "Who *is* this who darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?
3 Now prepare yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

37:12 [a]Literally *the world of the earth*

Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

JOB 38:6, 7

4 "Where were you when I laid the
foundations of the earth?
Tell *Me,* if you have understanding.
5 Who determined its measurements?
Surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
6 To what were its foundations fastened?
Or who laid its cornerstone,
7 When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

8 "Or *who* shut in the sea with doors,
When it burst forth *and* issued from
the womb;
9 When I made the clouds its garment,
And thick darkness its swaddling band;
10 When I fixed My limit for it,
And set bars and doors;
11 When I said,
'This far you may come, but no farther,
And here your proud waves must stop!'

12 "Have you commanded the morning
since your days *began,*
And caused the dawn to know its place,
13 That it might take hold of the ends of
the earth,
And the wicked be shaken out of it?
14 It takes on form like clay *under* a seal,
And stands out like a garment.
15 From the wicked their light is withheld,
And the upraised arm is broken.

16 "Have you entered the springs of the sea?
Or have you walked in search of the
depths?
17 Have the gates of death been revealed
to you?
Or have you seen the doors of the
shadow of death?
18 Have you comprehended the breadth
of the earth?
Tell *Me,* if you know all this.

19 "Where *is* the way *to* the dwelling of light?
And darkness, where *is* its place,
20 That you may take it to its territory,
That you may know the paths *to* its
home?
21 Do you know *it,* because you were
born then,
Or *because* the number of your days
is great?

22 "Have you entered the treasury of snow,
Or have you seen the treasury of hail,
23 Which I have reserved for the time of
trouble,
For the day of battle and war?
24 By what way is light diffused,
Or the east wind scattered over the
earth?

25 "Who has divided a channel for the
overflowing *water,*
Or a path for the thunderbolt,
26 To cause it to rain on a land *where there*
is no one,
A wilderness in which *there is* no man;
27 To satisfy the desolate waste,
And cause to spring forth the growth
of tender grass?
28 Has the rain a father?
Or who has begotten the drops of dew?
29 From whose womb comes the ice?
And the frost of heaven, who gives it
birth?
30 The waters harden like stone,
And the surface of the deep is frozen.

31 "Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades,
Or loose the belt of Orion?
32 Can you bring out Mazzaroth[a] in its
season?
Or can you guide the Great Bear with
its cubs?
33 Do you know the ordinances of the
heavens?
Can you set their dominion over the
earth?

34 "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
That an abundance of water may
cover you?
35 Can you send out lightnings, that they
may go,
And say to you, 'Here we *are!*'?
36 Who has put wisdom in the mind?[a]

38:32 [a]Literally *Constellations* **38:36** [a]Literally *inward parts*

Or who has given understanding to the heart?
37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom?
Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven,
38 When the dust hardens in clumps,
And the clods cling together?

39 "Can you hunt the prey for the lion,
Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
40 When they crouch in *their* dens,
Or lurk in their lairs to lie in wait?
41 Who provides food for the raven,
When its young ones cry to God,
And wander about for lack of food?

39 "Do you know the time when the wild mountain goats bear young?
Or can you mark when the deer gives birth?
2 Can you number the months *that* they fulfill?
Or do you know the time when they bear young?
3 They bow down,
They bring forth their young,
They deliver their offspring.[a]
4 Their young ones are healthy,
They grow strong with grain;
They depart and do not return to them.

5 "Who set the wild donkey free?
Who loosed the bonds of the onager,
6 Whose home I have made the wilderness,
And the barren land his dwelling?
7 He scorns the tumult of the city;
He does not heed the shouts of the driver.
8 The range of the mountains *is* his pasture,
And he searches after every green thing.

9 "Will the wild ox be willing to serve you?
Will he bed by your manger?
10 Can you bind the wild ox in the furrow with ropes?
Or will he plow the valleys behind you?
11 Will you trust him because his strength *is* great?
Or will you leave your labor to him?
12 Will you trust him to bring home your grain,
And gather it to your threshing floor?

13 "The wings of the ostrich wave proudly,
But are her wings and pinions *like the* kindly stork's?
14 For she leaves her eggs on the ground,
And warms them in the dust;
15 She forgets that a foot may crush them,
Or that a wild beast may break them.
16 She treats her young harshly, as though *they were* not hers;
Her labor is in vain, without concern,
17 Because God deprived her of wisdom,
And did not endow her with understanding.
18 When she lifts herself on high,
She scorns the horse and its rider.

19 "Have you given the horse strength?
Have you clothed his neck with thunder?[a]
20 Can you frighten him like a locust?
His majestic snorting strikes terror.
21 He paws in the valley, and rejoices in *his* strength;
He gallops into the clash of arms.
22 He mocks at fear, and is not frightened;
Nor does he turn back from the sword.
23 The quiver rattles against him,
The glittering spear and javelin.
24 He devours the distance with fierceness and rage;
Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet *has* sounded.
25 At *the blast of* the trumpet he says, 'Aha!'
He smells the battle from afar,
The thunder of captains and shouting.

26 "Does the hawk fly by your wisdom,
And spread its wings toward the south?
27 Does the eagle mount up at your command,
And make its nest on high?
28 On the rock it dwells and resides,
On the crag of the rock and the stronghold.
29 From there it spies out the prey;
Its eyes observe from afar.
30 Its young ones suck up blood;
And where the slain *are,* there it *is.*"

40 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said:

2 "Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct *Him?*
He who rebukes God, let him answer it."

39:3 [a]Literally *pangs,* figurative of offspring **39:19** [a]Or *a mane*

Job's Response to God

3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

4 "Behold, I am vile;
What shall I answer You?
I lay my hand over my mouth.
5 Once I have spoken, but I will not answer;
Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

God's Challenge to Job

6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

7 "Now prepare yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer Me:

8 "Would you indeed annul My judgment?
Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?
9 Have you an arm like God?
Or can you thunder with a voice like His?
10 Then adorn yourself *with* majesty and splendor,
And array yourself with glory and beauty.
11 Disperse the rage of your wrath;
Look on everyone *who is* proud, and humble him.
12 Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low;
Tread down the wicked in their place.
13 Hide them in the dust together,
Bind their faces in hidden *darkness.*
14 Then I will also confess to you
That your own right hand can save you.

15 "Look now at the behemoth,[a] which I made *along* with you;
He eats grass like an ox.
16 See now, his strength *is* in his hips,
And his power *is* in his stomach muscles.
17 He moves his tail like a cedar;
The sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.
18 His bones *are like* beams of bronze,
His ribs like bars of iron.
19 He *is* the first of the ways of God;
Only He who made him can bring near His sword.
20 Surely the mountains yield food for him,
And all the beasts of the field play there.
21 He lies under the lotus trees,
In a covert of reeds and marsh.
22 The lotus trees cover him *with* their shade;
The willows by the brook surround him.
23 Indeed the river may rage,
Yet he is not disturbed;
He is confident, though the Jordan gushes into his mouth,
24 *Though* he takes it in his eyes,
Or one pierces *his* nose with a snare.

41 "Can you draw out Leviathan[a] with a hook,
Or *snare* his tongue with a line *which* you lower?
2 Can you put a reed through his nose,
Or pierce his jaw with a hook?
3 Will he make many supplications to you?
Will he speak softly to you?
4 Will he make a covenant with you?
Will you take him as a servant forever?
5 Will you play with him as *with* a bird,
Or will you leash him for your maidens?
6 Will *your* companions make a banquet[a] of him?
Will they apportion him among the merchants?
7 Can you fill his skin with harpoons,
Or his head with fishing spears?
8 Lay your hand on him;
Remember the battle—
Never do it again!
9 Indeed, *any* hope of *overcoming* him is false;
Shall *one not* be overwhelmed at the sight of him?
10 No one *is so* fierce that he would dare stir him up.
Who then is able to stand against Me?
11 Who has preceded Me, that I should pay *him?*
Everything under heaven is Mine.

12 "I will not conceal[a] his limbs,
His mighty power, or his graceful proportions.
13 Who can remove his outer coat?
Who can approach *him* with a double bridle?
14 Who can open the doors of his face,
With his terrible teeth all around?
15 *His* rows of scales are *his* pride,
Shut up tightly *as with* a seal;
16 One is so near another
That no air can come between them;
17 They are joined one to another,
They stick together and cannot be parted.

40:15 [a]A large animal, exact identity unknown **41:1** [a]A large sea creature, exact identity unknown **41:6** [a]Or *bargain over him*
41:12 [a]Literally *keep silent about*

18 His sneezings flash forth light,
And his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning.
19 Out of his mouth go burning lights;
Sparks of fire shoot out.
20 Smoke goes out of his nostrils,
As *from* a boiling pot and burning rushes.
21 His breath kindles coals,
And a flame goes out of his mouth.
22 Strength dwells in his neck,
And sorrow dances before him.
23 The folds of his flesh are joined together;
They are firm on him and cannot be moved.
24 His heart is as hard as stone,
Even as hard as the lower *millstone*.
25 When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid;
Because of his crashings they are beside[a] themselves.
26 *Though* the sword reaches him, it cannot avail;
Nor does spear, dart, or javelin.
27 He regards iron as straw,
And bronze as rotten wood.
28 The arrow cannot make him flee;
Slingstones become like stubble to him.
29 Darts are regarded as straw;
He laughs at the threat of javelins.
30 His undersides *are* like sharp potsherds;
He spreads pointed *marks* in the mire.
31 He makes the deep boil like a pot;
He makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
32 He leaves a shining wake behind him;
One would think the deep had white hair.
33 On earth there is nothing like him,
Which is made without fear.
34 He beholds every high *thing;*
He *is* king over all the children of pride."

Job's Repentance and Restoration

42 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

2 "I know that You can do everything,
And that no purpose *of Yours* can be withheld from You.
3 *You asked,* 'Who *is* this who hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
4 Listen, please, and let me speak;
You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'

5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.
6 Therefore I abhor *myself,*
And repent in dust and ashes."

7 And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me *what is* right, as My servant Job *has.* 8 Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you *according to your* folly; because you have not spoken of Me *what is* right, as My servant Job *has.*"

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD commanded them; for the LORD had accepted Job. 10 And the LORD restored Job's losses[a] when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. 11 Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

12 Now the LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. 13 He also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. 15 In all the land were found no women *so* beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

16 After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren *for* four generations. 17 So Job died, old and full of days.

41:25 [a]Or *purify themselves* **42:10** [a]Literally *Job's captivity,* that is, what was captured from Job

In the Meantime

GLORIA GAITHER

"There are two great realities:"
she used to say,
"when someone dies
and when a child is born."
All other times we drift away,
lulled by the mundane tune
of in-the-meantime.
The baby must be fed,
the pasture mowed,
the larder stocked
against the coming storm;
the engine must be oiled,
the church must be attended,
a reputation must be kept,
and all must march along
in the meantime.
God. Let me die,
or else be born;
let me some Jordan cross
or squeeze through some
tight natal passage
into blinding dawn!
Infuse with pain or glory
joy or agony
the moments ticking by,
else I can't bear to shuffle through the
meantime.

THE BOOK OF

Psalms

BOOK ONE: Psalms 1—41

Psalm 1

The Way of the Righteous and the End of the Ungodly

Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

4 The ungodly *are* not so,
But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.
5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 2

The Messiah's Triumph and Kingdom

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,
3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us."

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.
5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
6 "Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion."

7 "I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
'You *are* My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
8 Ask of Me, and I will give *You*
The nations *for* Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
9 You shall break[a] them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
11 Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
12 Kiss the Son,[a] lest He[b] be angry,
And you perish *in* the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

2:9 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *rule* (compare Revelation 2:27). **2:12** [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Embrace discipline;* Targum reads *Receive instruction.* [b]Septuagint reads *the* LORD.

Blessed is the man who walks not
in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor stands in the path of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
but his delight is in the law
of the LORD, and in His law
he meditates day and night.
PSALM 1:1, 2

The most destructive thing about deep relationships with people who have the things and positions of earth as their god is the counsel they give. It doesn't matter how educated, how beautiful, how charming, how likeable they are, we can never walk in this counsel. It is always destructive because what is logical to them is not true. Often we forget that logic and truth are not the same thing. An untrue premise, reasoned through logically, will still arrive at an untrue conclusion though all the rules of logic may be followed.

Yet a fool of logic can know and speak the truth if she knows the God of truth.



Psalm 3

The LORD Helps His Troubled People

A Psalm of David when he fled
from Absalom his son.

LORD, how they have increased who trouble me!
Many *are* they who rise up against me.
2 Many *are* they who say of me,
"*There is* no help for him in God."
Selah

3 But You, O LORD, *are* a shield for me,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head.
4 I cried to the LORD with my voice,
And He heard me from His holy hill.
Selah

5 I lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.
6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people
Who have set *themselves* against me all around.

7 Arise, O LORD;
Save me, O my God!
For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone;
You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.
8 Salvation *belongs* to the LORD.
Your blessing *is* upon Your people.
Selah

Psalm 4

The Safety of the Faithful

To the Chief Musician. With stringed
instruments. A Psalm of David.

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness!
You have relieved me in *my* distress;
Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

2 How long, O you sons of men,
Will you turn my glory to shame?
How long will you love worthlessness
And seek falsehood?
Selah

3 But know that the LORD has set apart[a]
for Himself him who is godly;
The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

4 Be angry, and do not sin.
Meditate within your heart on your
bed, and be still.
Selah
5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
And put your trust in the LORD.

6 *There are* many who say,
"Who will show us *any* good?"
LORD, lift up the light of Your
countenance upon us.
7 You have put gladness in my heart,
More than in the season that their
grain and wine increased.
8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;
For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell
in safety.

Psalm 5

A Prayer for Guidance

To the Chief Musician. With flutes.[a]
A Psalm of David.

Give ear to my words, O LORD,
Consider my meditation.
2 Give heed to the voice of my cry,
My King and my God,
For to You I will pray.
3 My voice You shall hear in the
morning, O LORD;
In the morning I will direct *it* to You,
And I will look up.

4 For You *are* not a God who takes
pleasure in wickedness,
Nor shall evil dwell with You.
5 The boastful shall not stand in Your
sight;
You hate all workers of iniquity.
6 You shall destroy those who speak
falsehood;
The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and
deceitful man.

7 But as for me, I will come into
Your house in the multitude
of Your mercy;
In fear of You I will worship toward
Your holy temple.
8 Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness
because of my enemies;
Make Your way straight before my face.

9 For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth;
Their inward part *is* destruction;
Their throat *is* an open tomb;
They flatter with their tongue.
10 Pronounce them guilty, O God!
Let them fall by their own counsels;
Cast them out in the multitude of
their transgressions,
For they have rebelled against You.

11 But let all those rejoice who put their
trust in You;
Let them ever shout for joy, because
You defend them;
Let those also who love Your name
Be joyful in You.
12 For You, O LORD, will bless the
righteous;
With favor You will surround him as
with a shield.

Psalm 6

A Prayer of Faith in Time of Distress

To the Chief Musician. With stringed
instruments. On an eight-stringed
harp.[a] A Psalm of David.

O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger,
Nor chasten me in Your hot
displeasure.
2 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I *am* weak;
O LORD, heal me, for my bones are
troubled.
3 My soul also is greatly troubled;
But You, O LORD—how long?

4 Return, O LORD, deliver me!
Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake!
5 For in death *there is* no remembrance
of You;
In the grave who will give You thanks?

6 I am weary with my groaning;
All night I make my bed swim;
I drench my couch with my tears.
7 My eye wastes away because of grief;
It grows old because of all my enemies.

4:3 [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *made wonderful.* **5:title** [a]Hebrew *nehiloth* **6:title** [a]Hebrew *sheminith*

8 Depart from me, all you workers of
iniquity;
For the LORD has heard the voice of my
weeping.
9 The LORD has heard my supplication;
The LORD will receive my prayer.
10 Let all my enemies be ashamed and
greatly troubled;
Let them turn back *and* be ashamed
suddenly.

Psalm 7

Prayer and Praise for Deliverance from Enemies

A Meditation[a] of David, which he sang
to the LORD concerning the words
of Cush, a Benjamite.

O LORD my God, in You I put my trust;
Save me from all those who
persecute me;
And deliver me,
2 Lest they tear me like a lion,
Rending *me* in pieces, while *there is*
none to deliver.

3 O LORD my God, if I have done this:
If there is iniquity in my hands,
4 If I have repaid evil to him who was at
peace with me,
Or have plundered my enemy without
cause,
5 Let the enemy pursue me and
overtake *me;*
Yes, let him trample my life to the earth,
And lay my honor in the dust.
Selah

6 Arise, O LORD, in Your anger;
Lift Yourself up because of the rage of
my enemies;
Rise up for me[a] *to* the judgment You
have commanded!
7 So the congregation of the peoples
shall surround You;
For their sakes, therefore, return on high.
8 The LORD shall judge the peoples;
Judge me, O LORD, according to my
righteousness,
And according to my integrity within me.

9 Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked
come to an end,
But establish the just;

7:title [a]Hebrew *Shiggaion* **7:6** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *O LORD my God.*



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the LORD will hear when I call to Him. | PSALM 4:3

I recently received a letter from someone I had not seen since she was a child. In the letter she related her life's story—all the wrong turns she had made in life, and, more recently, the right choices that brought her to a godly perspective and peace.

At a concert in Fresno, California, I listened and was blessed by a gentleman who through tears told of the recent death of his two children. He said, "Tonight, as you were singing the song 'Jerusalem,' I could picture my son and daughter walking the streets of gold."

At another concert a young lady asked if she could speak to me. We walked outside the auditorium and sat on a cement pillar. She poured out her heart, telling me about what she was experiencing in her life at that time. She

For the righteous God tests the hearts
and minds.
10 My defense *is* of God,
Who saves the upright in heart.

11 God *is* a just judge,
And God is angry *with the wicked*
every day.
12 If he does not turn back,
He will sharpen His sword;
He bends His bow and makes it ready.
13 He also prepares for Himself
instruments of death;
He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

14 Behold, *the wicked* brings forth iniquity;
Yes, he conceives trouble and brings
forth falsehood.
15 He made a pit and dug it out,
And has fallen into the ditch *which*
he made.
16 His trouble shall return upon his
own head,
And his violent dealing shall come
down on his own crown.

17 I will praise the LORD according to His
righteousness,
And will sing praise to the name of the
LORD Most High.

I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.
PSALM 7:17

Psalm 8

The Glory of the LORD in Creation

To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gath.[a] A Psalm of David.

O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent *is* Your name in all
the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the
heavens!

2 Out of the mouth of babes and nursing
infants
You have ordained strength,
Because of Your enemies,
That You may silence the enemy and
the avenger.

3 When I consider Your heavens, the
work of Your fingers,

8:title [a]Hebrew *Al Gittith*

finished, smiled, and hugged me and said, "You have really helped me." I had not said one word.

I have learned through the years that sometimes all we need to do is listen. We live in a loud world. To get someone's attention is no easy task. I try to listen to people, but I know I sometimes miss their signal, fail to hear, "Pass by on the other side." But I know from personal experience that there is someone we can always talk to who is always listening. Our voices matter in heaven. God takes us very seriously. No need to fear that we will be ignored. Even if we stammer or stumble, even if what we have to say impresses no one, it impresses God, and He listens. He listens to the painful plea of the elderly in the rest home. He listens to the gruff confession of the death-row inmate. When the substance abuser begs for mercy, when the spouse seeks guidance, when the businessman steps off the street into the church, God listens. Our prayers are honored as precious jewels. Our words do not stop until they reach the very throne of God. Consider the prayer of Moses for the children of Israel in Exodus 32:30–32, or the prayer of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20:5. We may not understand the mystery of prayer. We don't need to, but this much is clear: action in heaven begins when someone prays on earth. Talk to God because God listens.

The moon and the stars, which You
have ordained,
4 What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
5 For You have made him a little lower
than the angels,[a]
And You have crowned him with glory
and honor.

I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.
PSALM 9:2

6 You have made him to have dominion
over the works of Your hands;
You have put all *things* under his feet,
7 All sheep and oxen—
Even the beasts of the field,
8 The birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea
That pass through the paths of the seas.
9 O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent *is* Your name in all
the earth!

Psalm 9

Prayer and Thanksgiving for the LORD's Righteous Judgments

To the Chief Musician. To *the tune of* "Death of the Son."[a] A Psalm of David.

I will praise *You,* O LORD, with my whole
heart;
I will tell of all Your marvelous works.
2 I will be glad and rejoice in You;
I will sing praise to Your name,
O Most High.

3 When my enemies turn back,
They shall fall and perish at Your
presence.

8:5 [a]Hebrew *Elohim, God;* Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Jewish tradition translate as *angels.* **9:title** [a]Hebrew *Muth Labben*



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety. | PSALM 4:8

"When I lay my head down at night, I put it on a pillow of peace." A young college student spoke those words in his testimony about how wonderful it was to be a new Christian.

That experience is one of the true luxuries of life. It is one of the hidden treasures that we can keep on seeking and finding. Long after I was a Christian, I still had some terrible, numbing fears. I can pinpoint the spiritual skirmishes that were won with those fears and, likewise, can pinpoint the final victory. The final battle was won when I saw that the central issue was whether I thought God could defeat the devil and his evil power in the world, when it came to my own personal safety. It was humiliating to realize that, even as a Christian, by my fear I was saying that I actually thought the devil was more powerful than God. When I asked him to forgive me for that disbelief and told Him I would trust Him to protect me from personal harm, the battle with fear was won.

I was often alone, for Doug was a traveling man, and even now when I lay my head down at night, I put it on a pillow of peace.

4 For You have maintained my right and my cause;
You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.
5 You have rebuked the nations,
You have destroyed the wicked;
You have blotted out their name forever and ever.

6 O enemy, destructions are finished forever!
And you have destroyed cities;
Even their memory has perished.
7 But the LORD shall endure forever;
He has prepared His throne for judgment.
8 He shall judge the world in righteousness,
And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed,
A refuge in times of trouble.
10 And those who know Your name will put their trust in You;
For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion!
Declare His deeds among the people.
12 When He avenges blood, He remembers them;
He does not forget the cry of the humble.

13 Have mercy on me, O LORD!
Consider my trouble from those who hate me,
You who lift me up from the gates of death,
14 That I may tell of all Your praise
In the gates of the daughter of Zion.
I will rejoice in Your salvation.

15 The nations have sunk down in the pit *which* they made;
In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught.
16 The LORD is known *by* the judgment He executes;
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.
Meditation.[a]
Selah

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell,
And all the nations that forget God.
18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten;
The expectation of the poor shall *not* perish forever.

19 Arise, O LORD,
Do not let man prevail;
Let the nations be judged in Your sight.
20 Put them in fear, O LORD,
That the nations may know themselves *to be but* men.
Selah

Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion! Declare His deeds among the people.
PSALM 9:11

Psalm 10

A Song of Confidence in God's Triumph over Evil

Why do You stand afar off, O LORD?
Why do You hide in times of trouble?
2 The wicked in *his* pride persecutes the poor;
Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

3 For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire;
He blesses the greedy *and* renounces the LORD.
4 The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek *God;*
God *is* in none of his thoughts.

5 His ways are always prospering;
Your judgments *are* far above, out of his sight;
As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.
6 He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved;
I shall never be in adversity."
7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression;
Under his tongue *is* trouble and iniquity.

9:16 [a]Hebrew *Higgaion*

Those who know Your name will
put their trust in You;
for You, LORD, have not forsaken
those who seek You.
PSALM 9:10

When there is a threat to our physical lifestyle like a terrorist attack or a national power outage, the tasks of really making provisions for an extended time for a whole family is mind-boggling: water for drinking and bathing, food, paper products, fuel for heat . . .

But there never has to be hoarding to make provisions for the spirit. The only provision we need or ever will need is Christ Himself. If we have a relationship with Him, we have an abundant, ever-extravagant supply that we can fearlessly say will never run out. Relationship is all we need. The manna in the wilderness reminds us that He will take care of our physical needs, too, if the heart ties are strong—even in the wilderness days of our lives.



8 He sits in the lurking places of the villages;
In the secret places he murders the innocent;
His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless.
9 He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den;
He lies in wait to catch the poor;
He catches the poor when he draws him into his net.
10 So he crouches, he lies low,
That the helpless may fall by his strength.
11 He has said in his heart,
"God has forgotten;
He hides His face;
He will never see."

12 Arise, O LORD!
O God, lift up Your hand!
Do not forget the humble.
13 Why do the wicked renounce God?
He has said in his heart,
"You will not require *an account*."

14 But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief,
To repay *it* by Your hand.
The helpless commits himself to You;
You are the helper of the fatherless.
15 Break the arm of the wicked and the evil *man;*
Seek out his wickedness *until* You find none.

16 The LORD *is* King forever and ever;
The nations have perished out of His land.
17 LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble;
You will prepare their heart;
You will cause Your ear to hear,
18 To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
That the man of the earth may oppress no more.

Psalm 11

Faith in the LORD's Righteousness

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David.

In the LORD I put my trust;
How can you say to my soul,
"Flee *as* a bird to your mountain"?
2 For look! The wicked bend *their* bow,

They make ready their arrow on the string,
That they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart.
3 If the foundations are destroyed,
What can the righteous do?

4 The LORD *is* in His holy temple,
The LORD's throne *is* in heaven;
His eyes behold,
His eyelids test the sons of men.
5 The LORD tests the righteous,
But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.
6 Upon the wicked He will rain coals;
Fire and brimstone and a burning wind
Shall be the portion of their cup.

7 For the LORD *is* righteous,
He loves righteousness;
His countenance beholds the upright.[a]

Psalm 12

Man's Treachery and God's Constancy

To the Chief Musician. On an eight-stringed harp.[a] A Psalm of David.

Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!
For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.
2 They speak idly everyone with his neighbor;
With flattering lips *and* a double heart they speak.

3 May the LORD cut off all flattering lips,
And the tongue that speaks proud things,
4 Who have said,
"With our tongue we will prevail;
Our lips *are* our own;
Who *is* lord over us?"

5 "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,
Now I will arise," says the LORD;
"I will set *him* in the safety for which he yearns."

6 The words of the LORD *are* pure words,
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,
Purified seven times.
7 You shall keep them, O LORD,
You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

8 The wicked prowl on every side,
When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

I will sing to the LORD, because
He has dealt bountifully with me.
PSALM 13:6

Psalm 13

Trust in the Salvation of the LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?
How long will You hide Your face from me?
2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
Having sorrow in my heart daily?
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

3 Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God;
Enlighten my eyes,
Lest I sleep the *sleep of* death;
4 Lest my enemy say,
"I have prevailed against him";
Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

5 But I have trusted in Your mercy;
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.
6 I will sing to the LORD,
Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

Psalm 14

Folly of the Godless, and God's Final Triumph

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David.

The fool has said in his heart,
"*There is* no God."
They are corrupt,
They have done abominable works,
There is none who does good.

2 The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

11:7 [a]Or *The upright beholds His countenance* **12:title** [a]Hebrew *sheminith*

In Your presence is fullness of joy;
at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
PSALM 16:11

Almost anything that gets our full attention at the exclusion of other joys will eventually kill our joy in everything. That skewed focus is called in our culture an addiction. The Scripture calls it idolatry. The irony is that this misplaced affection ultimately strangles all other affections. This is Satan's ploy. Satan wants to steal our joy because the "joy of the LORD is [our] strength" (Neh. 8:10). Satan wants our strength; he wants us weak and vulnerable and easy to topple. How healthy the advice is: "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4). This is a central truth of the Word—the central teaching of Jesus: love the Lord the most. When God is our central affection there is immediate and deep joy in all other things; our joy center widens, our pleasures become many—"pleasures forevermore." God will never be an addiction. He is truth. And when ultimate truth is our adored love—all other loves take their rightful place and all addictions are broken!



3 They have all turned aside,
They have together become corrupt;
There is none who does good,
No, not one.

4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge,
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread,
And do not call on the LORD?
5 There they are in great fear,
For God *is* with the generation of the righteous.
6 You shame the counsel of the poor,
But the LORD *is* his refuge.

7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel *would come* out of Zion!
When the LORD brings back the captivity of His people,
Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

Psalm 15

The Character of Those Who May Dwell with the LORD

A Psalm of David.

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

2 He who walks uprightly,
And works righteousness,
And speaks the truth in his heart;
3 He *who* does not backbite with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;
4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised,
But he honors those who fear the LORD;
He *who* swears to his own hurt and does not change;
5 He *who* does not put out his money at usury,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

He who does these *things* shall never be moved.

Psalm 16

The Hope of the Faithful, and the Messiah's Victory

A Michtam of David.

Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.

2 *O my soul,* you have said to the LORD,
"You *are* my Lord,
My goodness is nothing apart
from You."
3 As for the saints who *are* on the earth,
"They are the excellent ones, in whom
is all my delight."

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who
hasten *after* another *god;*
Their drink offerings of blood I will
not offer,
Nor take up their names on my lips.

5 O LORD, *You are* the portion of my
inheritance and my cup;
You maintain my lot.
6 The lines have fallen to me in
pleasant *places;*
Yes, I have a good inheritance.

7 I will bless the LORD who has given
me counsel;
My heart also instructs me in the
night seasons.
8 I have set the LORD always before me;
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall
not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my
glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.
10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to
see corruption.
11 You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures
forevermore.

Psalm 17

Prayer with Confidence in Final Salvation

A Prayer of David.

Hear a just cause, O LORD,
Attend to my cry;
Give ear to my prayer *which is* not
from deceitful lips.
2 Let my vindication come from Your
presence;
Let Your eyes look on the things that
are upright.

3 You have tested my heart;
You have visited *me* in the night;
You have tried me and have found
nothing;
I have purposed that my mouth shall
not transgress.
4 Concerning the works of men,
By the word of Your lips,
I have kept away from the paths of
the destroyer.
5 Uphold my steps in Your paths,
That my footsteps may not slip.

6 I have called upon You, for You will
hear me, O God;
Incline Your ear to me, *and* hear
my speech.
7 Show Your marvelous lovingkindness
by Your right hand,
O You who save those who trust
in You
From those who rise up *against them.*
8 Keep me as the apple of Your eye;
Hide me under the shadow of
Your wings,
9 From the wicked who oppress me,
From my deadly enemies who
surround me.

10 They have closed up their fat *hearts;*
With their mouths they speak proudly.
11 They have now surrounded us in
our steps;
They have set their eyes, crouching
down to the earth,
12 As a lion is eager to tear his prey,
And like a young lion lurking in
secret places.

13 Arise, O LORD,
Confront him, cast him down;
Deliver my life from the wicked with
Your sword,
14 With Your hand from men, O LORD,
From men of the world *who have* their
portion in *this* life,
And whose belly You fill with Your
hidden treasure.
They are satisfied with children,
And leave the rest of their *possession*
for their babes.

15 As for me, I will see Your face in
righteousness;
I shall be satisfied when I awake in
Your likeness.

Psalm 18

God the Sovereign Savior

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said:

I will love You, O LORD, my strength.
2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress
and my deliverer;
My God, my strength, in whom I will
trust;
My shield and the horn of my
salvation, my stronghold.
3 I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy*
to be praised;
So shall I be saved from my
enemies.
4 The pangs of death surrounded me,
And the floods of ungodliness made
me afraid.
5 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;
The snares of death confronted me.
6 In my distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried out to my God;
He heard my voice from His temple,
And my cry came before Him, *even* to
His ears.
7 Then the earth shook and trembled;



DESTINY RAMBO McGUIRE • Homecoming Artist, Daughter of Reba and Dony McGuire

For who is God, except the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God? It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on my high places. | PSALM 18:31–33

Don't you just love it when you think you have life completely figured out, and in a flash everything turns upside down? A few years ago, I was on my way to pursuing a lifelong dream of excelling as a dancer. I had trained since early childhood, and I couldn't imagine life without expressing myself in this art form. I never saw it as pointless movement, and something in me longed to grow so much in my craft that I could take graceful excellence into the church. Dance and worship held hands and shaped the woman I was becoming.

One not so very special Easter Sunday, all of that changed. The dance company I was teaching at the time performed Judy Jacob's breathtaking version of "Mercy Said No," and I was playing the part of embodied evil. Halfway through the song I traveled across the stage to do my signature move, the *tour jeté*, a move consisting of leaping into the air, kicking both legs behind me and landing on one bent knee after completing a 360-degree spin midair. When I landed, my knee split in two inside. The audience thought my wails were part of the performance and applauded as I screamed in pain and crawled across the platform. How humiliating!

That horrific moment was the beginning of a two-year road to recovery that almost claimed my sanity. It took two surgeries on my right knee to try to repair the fifteen years of damage causing the injury. For over a year I was in and out of a wheelchair, on and off crutches, and riding a roller coaster of emotions. I blamed

The foundations of the hills also
quaked and were shaken,
Because He was angry.
8 Smoke went up from His nostrils,
And devouring fire from His mouth;
Coals were kindled by it.
9 He bowed the heavens also, and
came down
With darkness under His feet.
10 And He rode upon a cherub, and flew;
He flew upon the wings of the wind.
11 He made darkness His secret place;
His canopy around Him *was* dark waters
And thick clouds of the skies.
12 From the brightness before Him,
His thick clouds passed with
hailstones and coals of fire.
13 The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered His voice,
Hailstones and coals of fire.[a]
14 He sent out His arrows and scattered
the foe,
Lightnings in abundance, and He
vanquished them.
15 Then the channels of the sea were seen,
The foundations of the world were
uncovered
At Your rebuke, O LORD,
At the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.

16 He sent from above, He took me;
He drew me out of many waters.

18:13 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; a few Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint omit *Hailstones and coals of fire.*

God for my misfortune, asking why He could be so cruel and take away something that was such a major part of my identity. Doctors were sweet but not very reassuring. The reports were consistently negative: "You'll never walk properly again . . . just concentrate on being a singer . . . you will never dance the way you once did." It became increasingly difficult to be hopeful. I attempted to still teach and choreograph from the wheelchair in spite of my feeble state.

After a long road to recovery, I began dancing again, slowly. Nothing felt the same. I would leave rehearsals so discouraged and overwhelmed with grief for the passion I had lost. After physical therapy and retraining, I decided to start dancing again with my elementary school students. During the first performance back, my left knee gave out, acquiring the exact same injury as my first. A friend came to carry me off the platform, and I kicked and screamed in pain, tears so thick I couldn't see straight. "Not again, not again . . . ," I wailed repeatedly.

I realized in that moment, I had a choice of repeating the previous two years of depression and medication or lifting up my eyes and believing God knew my suffering and hadn't forsaken me.

I flipped open my Bible and my eyes landed on Psalm 18:33, "He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and sets me on my high places." Or, as another lovely translation says, "He makes me as surefooted as a deer, enabling me to stand on mountain heights" (NLT).

Those words filled my heart like a perfect cup of steaming hot cocoa. I closed my eyes and imagined the Holy Spirit carrying me through that moment. I saw how foolish it was for me to waste my time being depressed and causing the healing process to last longer than necessary. I chose to think myself whole. My left knee healed in record time. I know it was due to the fact that I surrendered to the true Physician setting me on His high mountain.

17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From those who hated me,
For they were too strong for me.
18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
But the LORD was my support.
19 He also brought me out into a broad place;
He delivered me because He delighted in me.

20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness;
According to the cleanness of my hands
He has recompensed me.
21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
22 For all His judgments *were* before me,
And I did not put away His statutes from me.
23 I was also blameless before Him,
And I kept myself from my iniquity.
24 Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands in His sight.

25 With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful;
With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;
26 With the pure You will show Yourself pure;
And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.
27 For You will save the humble people,
But will bring down haughty looks.

28 For You will light my lamp;
The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.
29 For by You I can run against a troop,
By my God I can leap over a wall.
30 *As for* God, His way *is* perfect;
The word of the LORD is proven;
He *is* a shield to all who trust in Him.

31 For who *is* God, except the LORD?
And who *is* a rock, except our God?
32 *It is* God who arms me with strength,
And makes my way perfect.
33 He makes my feet like the *feet of* deer,
And sets me on my high places.
34 He teaches my hands to make war,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation;
Your right hand has held me up,
Your gentleness has made me great.
36 You enlarged my path under me,
So my feet did not slip.

37 I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them;
Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed.
38 I have wounded them,
So that they could not rise;
They have fallen under my feet.
39 For You have armed me with strength for the battle;
You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.
40 You have also given me the necks of my enemies,
So that I destroyed those who hated me.
41 They cried out, but *there was* none to save;
Even to the LORD, but He did not answer them.
42 Then I beat them as fine as the dust before the wind;
I cast them out like dirt in the streets.

43 You have delivered me from the strivings of the people;
You have made me the head of the nations;
A people I have not known shall serve me.
44 As soon as they hear of me they obey me;
The foreigners submit to me.
45 The foreigners fade away,
And come frightened from their hideouts.

46 The LORD lives!
Blessed *be* my Rock!
Let the God of my salvation be exalted.
47 *It is* God who avenges me,
And subdues the peoples under me;
48 He delivers me from my enemies.

You also lift me up above those who
rise against me;
You have delivered me from the violent
man.
49 Therefore I will give thanks to You, O
LORD, among the Gentiles,
And sing praises to Your name.

50 Great deliverance He gives to His king,
And shows mercy to His anointed,
To David and his descendants
forevermore.

Therefore I will give thanks to You,
O LORD, among the Gentiles,
and sing praises to Your name.
PSALM 18:49

Psalm 19

The Perfect Revelation of the LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His
handiwork.
2 Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.
3 *There is* no speech nor language
Where their voice is not heard.
4 Their line[a] has gone out through all
the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.

In them He has set a tabernacle for
the sun,
5 Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out
of his chamber,
And rejoices like a strong man to run
its race.
6 Its rising *is* from one end of heaven,
And its circuit to the other end;
And there is nothing hidden from
its heat.

7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect,
converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure,
making wise the simple;
8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right,
rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure,
enlightening the eyes;
9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring
forever;
The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and*
righteous altogether.
10 More to be desired *are they* than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the
honeycomb.
11 Moreover by them Your servant is
warned,
And in keeping them *there is* great reward.

12 Who can understand *his* errors?
Cleanse me from secret *faults.*
13 Keep back Your servant also from
presumptuous *sins;*
Let them not have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
And I shall be innocent of great
transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the
meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

Psalm 20

The Assurance of God's Saving Work

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

May the LORD answer you in the day of
trouble;
May the name of the God of Jacob
defend you;
2 May He send you help from the
sanctuary,
And strengthen you out of Zion;
3 May He remember all your offerings,
And accept your burnt sacrifice.
Selah

4 May He grant you according to your
heart's *desire,*
And fulfill all your purpose.
5 We will rejoice in your salvation,
And in the name of our God we will set
up *our* banners!
May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

19:4 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *sound;* Targum reads *business.*

6 Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed;
He will answer him from His holy heaven
With the saving strength of His right hand.

7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses;
But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.
8 They have bowed down and fallen;
But we have risen and stand upright.

9 Save, LORD!
May the King answer us when we call.

Psalm 21

Joy in the Salvation of the LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD;
And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!
2 You have given him his heart's desire,
And have not withheld the request of his lips.

Selah

3 For You meet him with the blessings of goodness;
You set a crown of pure gold upon his head.
4 He asked life from You, *and* You gave *it* to him—
Length of days forever and ever.
5 His glory *is* great in Your salvation;
Honor and majesty You have placed upon him.
6 For You have made him most blessed forever;
You have made him exceedingly glad with Your presence.
7 For the king trusts in the LORD,



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. | PSALM 25:18

Long ago my little child came to me in tears and said, "Mother, you told me not to touch your favorite vase, but I did and I broke it. Mother, I'm so sorry, please forgive me; and look, I have cut my hand!"

She took care of what was most important first by asking for my forgiveness and receiving my love before she remembered her physical hurt and said, "Look at the cut."

That was the wonderful wisdom of a child, in realizing what was most important—asking forgiveness—and what was secondary—asking for help with the pain.

I should be so wise when going to my heavenly Parent. I do want Him to "look upon my pain." I want my physical illness to be subjected to His loving mercy. But most of all, I want His forgiveness and love for any intentional or unintentional breaking of His "favorite vase," His law. "Praise the the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever" (Ps. 106:1).

Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength! We will sing and praise Your power.
PSALM 21:13

And through the mercy of the Most
High he shall not be moved.

8 Your hand will find all Your enemies;
Your right hand will find those who
hate You.
9 You shall make them as a fiery oven in
the time of Your anger;
The LORD shall swallow them up in His
wrath,
And the fire shall devour them.
10 Their offspring You shall destroy from
the earth,
And their descendants from among
the sons of men.
11 For they intended evil against You;
They devised a plot *which* they are not
able *to perform*.
12 Therefore You will make them turn
their back;
You will make ready *Your arrows* on
Your string toward their faces.

13 Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength!
We will sing and praise Your power.

Psalm 22

The Suffering, Praise, and Posterity of the Messiah

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Deer
of the Dawn."[a] A Psalm of David.

My God, My God, why have You
forsaken Me?
Why are You so far from helping Me,
And from the words of My groaning?
2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but
You do not hear;
And in the night season, and am not
silent.

3 But You *are* holy,
Enthroned in the praises of Israel.
4 Our fathers trusted in You;
They trusted, and You delivered them.
5 They cried to You, and were
delivered;
They trusted in You, and were not
ashamed.

6 But I *am* a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised by
the people.
7 All those who see Me ridicule Me;
They shoot out the lip, they shake the
head, *saying,*
8 "He trusted[a] in the LORD, let Him rescue
Him;
Let Him deliver Him, since He delights
in Him!"

9 But You *are* He who took Me out of
the womb;
You made Me trust *while* on My
mother's breasts.
10 I was cast upon You from birth.
From My mother's womb
You *have been* My God.
11 Be not far from Me,
For trouble *is* near;
For *there is* none to help.

12 Many bulls have surrounded Me;
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have
encircled Me.
13 They gape at Me *with* their mouths,
Like a raging and roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water,
And all My bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It has melted within Me.
15 My strength is dried up like a
potsherd,
And My tongue clings to My jaws;
You have brought Me to the dust of
death.

16 For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked has
enclosed Me.
They pierced[a] My hands and My feet;
17 I can count all My bones.
They look *and* stare at Me.
18 They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.

22:title [a]Hebrew *Aijeleth Hashahar* **22:8** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *hoped;* Targum reads *praised.* **22:16** [a]Following some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *Like a lion.*

The humble He guides in justice,
and the humble He teaches His way.
PSALM 25:9

Look around us. What seems just in the scales of human reasoning is not how things are. The fast don't always win, the strong don't always conquer, the wisest don't always eat the best, the smartest aren't always the richest, and the most skillful and accomplished aren't always the best-liked. Just so, we can plan away ("the best-laid plans of mice and men"), but the actual course of our days *will be* directed by God in the end.

Look back over your life. If you've had a heart for God, you have had a pilgrimage you could never have imagined. If the plan you had in the beginning had been exactly what actually happened, no telling where you would be. Hold to the Spirit, embrace the heart of God, and He will guide you into incredible places of understanding.



19 But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me;
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!
20 Deliver Me from the sword,
My precious *life* from the power of the dog.
21 Save Me from the lion's mouth
And from the horns of the wild oxen!

You have answered Me.

22 I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.
23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.

25 My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.
26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.
Let your heart live forever!

27 All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You.[a]
28 For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,
And He rules over the nations.

29 All the prosperous of the earth
Shall eat and worship;
All those who go down to the dust
Shall bow before Him,
Even he who cannot keep himself alive.

30 A posterity shall serve Him.
It will be recounted of the Lord to the *next* generation,
31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,
That He has done *this*.

22:27 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Targum; Arabic, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Him*.

Psalm 23

The LORD the Shepherd of His People

A Psalm of David.

The LORD *is* my shepherd;
I shall not want.
2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
3 He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You *are* with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell[a] in the house of the LORD
Forever.

Psalm 24

The King of Glory and His Kingdom

A Psalm of David.

The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.
2 For He has founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the waters.

3 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place?
4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,
Nor sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Do you know what a hymn is? It is singing to the praise of God. If you praise God and do not sing, you utter no hymn. If you praise anything which does not pertain to the praise of God—though in singing you praise, you utter no hymn. A hymn then contains these three things: song, and praise, and that of God. Praise then of God in song is called a hymn.

AUGUSTINE

6 This *is* Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,
Who seek Your face.

Selah

7 Lift up your heads, O you gates!
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
8 Who *is* this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O you gates!
Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
10 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
He *is* the King of glory.

Selah

Psalm 25

A Plea for Deliverance and Forgiveness

A Psalm of David.

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
2 O my God, I trust in You;
Let me not be ashamed;
Let not my enemies triumph over me.
3 Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed;
Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.

4 Show me Your ways, O LORD;
Teach me Your paths.

23:6 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *return*.

I sat down at the piano and my hands began to browse over the keys. Then something happened. I felt as though I could reach out and touch God. I found myself playing a melody, one I'd never heard or played before, and words came into my head—they just seemed to fall into place.

THOMAS DORSEY

5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You *are* the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.

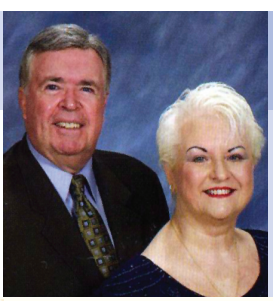
6 Remember, O LORD, Your tender
mercies and Your lovingkindnesses,
For they *are* from of old.
7 Do not remember the sins of my
youth, nor my transgressions;
According to Your mercy
remember me,
For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.

8 Good and upright *is* the LORD;
Therefore He teaches sinners in
the way.
9 The humble He guides in justice,
And the humble He teaches His way.
10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and
truth,
To such as keep His covenant and His
testimonies.
11 For Your name's sake, O LORD,
Pardon my iniquity, for it *is* great.

12 Who *is* the man that fears the LORD?
Him shall He[a] teach in the way
He[b] chooses.
13 He himself shall dwell in prosperity,
And his descendants shall inherit the
earth.
14 The secret of the LORD *is* with those
who fear Him,
And He will show them His covenant.
15 My eyes *are* ever toward the LORD,
For He shall pluck my feet out of the net.

16 Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy
on me,
For I *am* desolate and afflicted.

25:12 [a]Or *he* [b]Or *he*



JIM MURRAY • Homecoming Artist, Formerly with *The Imperials* and the *Gaither Vocal Band*

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? | PSALMS 27:1

I have been blessed of the Lord to have spent most of my life in and around gospel music and the Christian music scene. One of the nicest things we are asked to do because we are in the public eye is to sign our autographs. I've signed little tiny pieces of paper, a plaster cast on a broken arm, someone's sweaty hand, a Bible, and all manner of other things. Usually a picture or an old album is what folks want signed and I'm always happy to do that for them. I like to always give them more than just my signature, so I leave "Ps. 27:1" as part of my autograph. Now in light of eternity, my signature means nothing, but Psalm 27:1 contains eternal truth that I want to share with everyone.

17 The troubles of my heart have
enlarged;
Bring me out of my distresses!
18 Look on my affliction and my pain,
And forgive all my sins.
19 Consider my enemies, for they
are many;
And they hate me with cruel hatred.
20 Keep my soul, and deliver me;
Let me not be ashamed, for I put my
trust in You.
21 Let integrity and uprightness
preserve me,
For I wait for You.

22 Redeem Israel, O God,
Out of all their troubles!

Psalm 26

A Prayer for Divine Scrutiny and Redemption

A Psalm of David.

Vindicate me, O LORD,
For I have walked in my integrity.
I have also trusted in the LORD;
I shall not slip.
2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me;
Try my mind and my heart.
3 For Your lovingkindness *is* before my
eyes,
And I have walked in Your truth.
4 I have not sat with idolatrous mortals,
Nor will I go in with hypocrites.
5 I have hated the assembly of
evildoers,
And will not sit with the wicked.

6 I will wash my hands in innocence;
So I will go about Your altar, O LORD,
7 That I may proclaim with the voice of
thanksgiving,
And tell of all Your wondrous works.
8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of
Your house,
And the place where Your glory dwells.

9 Do not gather my soul with sinners,
Nor my life with bloodthirsty men,
10 In whose hands *is* a sinister scheme,
And whose right hand is full of bribes.

11 But as for me, I will walk in my integrity;
Redeem me and be merciful to me.
12 My foot stands in an even place;
In the congregations I will bless the LORD.

Throughout the many stages of my life, I've hung on to Psalm 27:1 as my life verse. When I left The Imperials in 1986 after twenty years with the group, I wondered what God had ahead for me and my family. I have to be totally honest and tell you that I was not at all afraid of the future. Even though I was clueless as to where God was sending me, I knew that He had already orchestrated my life; all I needed to do was follow the chart and watch the director. In 1988, Bill invited me to join The Gaither Vocal Band, which began a five-year stint and included in that time an abundance of glorious memories.

Psalm 27:1 continues to give me hope that in the light of any circumstance, I can know that my God holds me and cares all about what is going on in my life. I will not fear; I will not be afraid!

Psalm 27

An Exuberant Declaration of Faith

A Psalm of David.

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The LORD *is* the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?
2 When the wicked came against me
To eat up my flesh,
My enemies and foes,
They stumbled and fell.
3 Though an army may encamp
against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me,
In this I *will be* confident.

4 One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of
the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.
5 For in the time of trouble

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.
PSALM 27:6

He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle
He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.

6 And now my head shall be lifted up
above my enemies all around me;
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy
in His tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to
the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my
voice!
Have mercy also upon me, and
answer me.
8 *When You said,* "Seek My face,"



LILY ISAACS • Homecoming Artist, *The Isaacs*

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When you said, "Seek my face," my heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek." Do not hide Your face from me; do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me. | PSALM 27:7–10

The Psalms were written in the language of the human spirit. These songs or poems express the true longings of the soul. They are deeply emotional and authentic.

During the first part of my walk with the Lord, I had a difficult time learning how to pray to Jesus. Being raised in Judaism all my life, it was easy to pray to God and even say "Lord," but Jews do not accept Jesus as Messiah. Just saying the name of Jesus was hard for me. The feeling that I was betraying my family and my entire heritage was the hardest thing I'd ever

My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD,
I will seek."
9 Do not hide Your face from me;
Do not turn Your servant away in
anger;
You have been my help;
Do not leave me nor forsake me,
O God of my salvation.
10 When my father and my mother
forsake me,
Then the LORD will take care of me.

11 Teach me Your way, O LORD,
And lead me in a smooth path,
because of my enemies.
12 Do not deliver me to the will of my
adversaries;
For false witnesses have risen
against me,
And such as breathe out violence.
13 *I would have lost heart,* unless I had
believed
That I would see the goodness of
the LORD
In the land of the living.

14 Wait on the LORD;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!

Psalm 28

Rejoicing in Answered Prayer

A Psalm of David.

To You I will cry, O LORD my Rock:
Do not be silent to me,
Lest, if You *are* silent to me,
I become like those who go down
to the pit.
2 Hear the voice of my supplications
When I cry to You,
When I lift up my hands toward Your
holy sanctuary.

3 Do not take me away with the wicked
And with the workers of iniquity,
Who speak peace to their neighbors,
But evil *is* in their hearts.
4 Give them according to their deeds,
And according to the wickedness of
their endeavors;
Give them according to the work of
their hands;
Render to them what they deserve.

done. In my heart I knew it was right, but I still had this mountain to climb in my mind. I prayed as best I could and found comfort in these Psalms.

One day, unexpectedly, my parents called me on the phone and gave me a choice. Since finding out about my conversion, they were very upset with me. They said if I didn't give up this "crazy religion" I'd found, that I would never be welcome at home again. They said I was the black sheep of my family and they would rather see me dead. They basically disowned me.

With tears, I told them I didn't want to lose what I'd found. This heartbreaking confrontation taught me how to pray to Jesus—Yeshua, *my Messiah*, my best friend. At that point in my life He was all I had left. I felt desolate and alone. The name of Jesus came pouring out of me in groaning. My spirit was broken.

I was just a baby in Christ and had to lean on Him totally. It was months before they would talk to me again. This verse of Scripture was so comforting. Yes, the Lord did take care of me. He became my father and my mother, my everything. He still is today.

Joy Comes in the Morning

If you've knelt beside the rubble
Of an aching, broken heart,
When the things you gave your life to fell apart;
You're not the first to be acquainted
With sorrow, grief, or pain,
But the Master promised sunshine after rain.

Hold on My child,
Joy comes in the morning,
Weeping only lasts for the night;
Hold on My child,
Joy comes in the morning,
The darkest hour means
Dawn is just in sight.

To invest your seed of trust in God
In mountains you can't move,
You've risked your life on things you cannot prove;
But to give the things you cannot keep
For what you cannot lose
Is the way to find
The joy God has for you.

Hold on My child,
Joy comes in the morning,
Weeping only lasts for the night;
Hold on My child,
Joy comes in the morning,
The darkest hour means
Dawn is just in sight.

Weeping may endure for a night,
but joy comes in the morning.

PSALM 30:5

Hard times come to every person. Until the grip of this old world is forever broken by that final blast from Michael's trumpet, we will go on having what one hymn writer called "the night seasons" here on earth. No one is exempt from heartache. But the night cannot last forever, and the darkest hour is just before the dawn. God has promised that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Ps. 30:5).

One night while driving, Bill and I were listening to an African-American pastor on the radio encouraging his congregation, as well as his radio audience. With a genuine compassion for his people, he kept repeating this promise from Psalm 30: "Weeping endures for the night!" he said, asking them to repeat the words after him. "But joy comes in the morning! Let me hear you, now. Weeping endures for the night!" The people sang that phrase back to him. "But *joy* comes in the morning!" With one great voice they returned the affirmation: "Joy comes in the morning!"

Eventually the organ punctuated the truth. Its great music swelled like waves cresting on the beach. "Joy, joy comes in the morning!"

As we listened, the problems in our own lives seemed to settle into perspective in the immense power of God and His great faithfulness since the psalmist first wrote the words: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"!

The song that resulted from that experience has spoken to us for more than twenty years and has been used by God to give perspective and encouragement to many who have

written to us or spoken to us at concerts. Over the years we have come to understand that pain is, as C. S. Lewis once called it, "God's megaphone." It is a useful tool in the hand of the Master Craftsman of our souls to hollow out spaces in us for holding the joy in the morning!

When the hard times of life come, we know that no matter how tragic the circumstances seem, no matter how long the spiritual drought, no matter how dark the days, the sun is sure to break through; the dawn will come. The warmth of His assurance will hold us in an embrace once again, and we will know that our God has been there all along. We will hear Him say, through it all, "Hold on, My child, joy comes in the morning!"



5 Because they do not regard the works
of the LORD,
Nor the operation of His hands,
He shall destroy them
And not build them up.

6 Blessed *be* the LORD,
Because He has heard the voice of
my supplications!
7 The LORD *is* my strength and my
shield;
My heart trusted in Him, and I am
helped;
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,
And with my song I will praise Him.

8 The LORD *is* their strength,[a]
And He *is* the saving refuge of His
anointed.
9 Save Your people,
And bless Your inheritance;
Shepherd them also,
And bear them up forever.

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him.

PSALM 28:7

Psalm 29

Praise to God in His Holiness and Majesty

A Psalm of David.

Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones,
Give unto the LORD glory and
strength.
2 Give unto the LORD the glory due to
His name;
Worship the LORD in the beauty of
holiness.

3 The voice of the LORD *is* over the
waters;
The God of glory thunders;
The LORD *is* over many waters.
4 The voice of the LORD *is* powerful;
The voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.

Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.

PSALM 30:4

5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars,
Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of
Lebanon.
6 He makes them also skip like a calf,
Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.
7 The voice of the LORD divides the
flames of fire.

8 The voice of the LORD shakes the
wilderness;
The LORD shakes the Wilderness of
Kadesh.
9 The voice of the LORD makes the deer
give birth,
And strips the forests bare;
And in His temple everyone says, "Glory!"

10 The LORD sat *enthroned* at the Flood,
And the LORD sits as King forever.
11 The LORD will give strength to His
people;
The LORD will bless His people with
peace.

Psalm 30

The Blessedness of Answered Prayer

A Psalm. A Song at the dedication
of the house of David.

I will extol You, O LORD, for You have
lifted me up,
And have not let my foes rejoice over me.
2 O LORD my God, I cried out to You,
And You healed me.
3 O LORD, You brought my soul up from
the grave;
You have kept me alive, that I should
not go down to the pit.[a]

4 Sing praise to the LORD, you saints
of His,
And give thanks at the remembrance
of His holy name.[a]

28:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *the strength of His people*. **30:3** [a]Following Qere and Targum; Kethib, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *from those who descend to the pit*. **30:4** [a]Or *His holiness*

To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

PSALM 30:12

5 For His anger *is but for* a moment,
His favor *is for* life;
Weeping may endure for a night,
But joy *comes* in the morning.

6 Now in my prosperity I said,
"I shall never be moved."
7 LORD, by Your favor You have made my
mountain stand strong;
You hid Your face, *and* I was troubled.

8 I cried out to You, O LORD;
And to the LORD I made
supplication:
9 "What profit *is there* in my blood,
When I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise You?
Will it declare Your truth?
10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me;
LORD, be my helper!"
11 You have turned for me my mourning
into dancing;
You have put off my sackcloth and
clothed me with gladness,
12 To the end that *my* glory may sing
praise to You and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to
You forever.

Psalm 31

The LORD a Fortress in Adversity

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

In You, O LORD, I put my trust;
Let me never be ashamed;
Deliver me in Your righteousness.
2 Bow down Your ear to me,
Deliver me speedily;
Be my rock of refuge,
A fortress of defense to save me.

3 For You *are* my rock and my fortress;
Therefore, for Your name's sake,
Lead me and guide me.
4 Pull me out of the net which they
have secretly laid for me,
For You *are* my strength.
5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit;



ANN DOWNING • Homecoming Artist, Formerly of *The Downings* and *The Speers*

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. | PSALM 27:13

Patsy Clairmont shared this verse with me shortly after my husband Paul's funeral . . . and to be honest, at that time I couldn't see any way to ever see the goodness of the Lord again here on earth. Sure, in heaven I would! But I made a very important decision when I opened Patsy's card and read. By faith I chose to believe it and commit to living in that truth, even though I didn't feel it. The truth finally reached me on the feeling level as time moved on, and I do see His goodness again—not because I don't miss Paul, but because it's just the truth.

You have redeemed me, O LORD God
of truth.

6 I have hated those who regard
useless idols;
But I trust in the LORD.
7 I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy,
For You have considered my trouble;
You have known my soul in adversities,
8 And have not shut me up into the
hand of the enemy;
You have set my feet in a wide place.

9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am
in trouble;
My eye wastes away with grief,
Yes, my soul and my body!
10 For my life is spent with grief,
And my years with sighing;
My strength fails because of my iniquity,
And my bones waste away.
11 I am a reproach among all my enemies,
But especially among my neighbors,
And *am* repulsive to my acquaintances;
Those who see me outside flee from me.
12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out
of mind;
I am like a broken vessel.
13 For I hear the slander of many;
Fear *is* on every side;
While they take counsel together
against me,
They scheme to take away my life.

14 But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD;
I say, "You *are* my God."
15 My times *are* in Your hand;
Deliver me from the hand of my
enemies,
And from those who persecute me.
16 Make Your face shine upon Your servant;
Save me for Your mercies' sake.
17 Do not let me be ashamed, O LORD, for
I have called upon You;
Let the wicked be ashamed;
Let them be silent in the grave.
18 Let the lying lips be put to silence,
Which speak insolent things proudly and
contemptuously against the righteous.

19 Oh, how great *is* Your goodness,
Which You have laid up for those who
fear You,
Which You have prepared for those
who trust in You
In the presence of the sons of men!
20 You shall hide them in the secret place
of Your presence
From the plots of man;
You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion
From the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed *be* the LORD,
For He has shown me His marvelous
kindness in a strong city!
22 For I said in my haste,
"I am cut off from before Your eyes";
Nevertheless You heard the voice of
my supplications
When I cried out to You.

23 Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints!
For the LORD preserves the faithful,
And fully repays the proud person.
24 Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart,
All you who hope in the LORD.

Psalm 32

The Joy of Forgiveness

A Psalm of David. A Contemplation.[a]

Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is*
forgiven,
Whose sin *is* covered.
2 Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD
does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.

3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.
4 For day and night Your hand was heavy
upon me;
My vitality was turned into the
drought of summer.
Selah
5 I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions
to the LORD,"
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.
Selah

6 For this cause everyone who is godly
shall pray to You

32:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.
PSALM 32:7

In a time when You may be found;
Surely in a flood of great waters
They shall not come near him.
7 You *are* my hiding place;
You shall preserve me from trouble;
You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.
Selah

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will guide you with My eye.
9 Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule,
Which have no understanding,
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,
Else they will not come near you.

10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked;
But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.
11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous;
And shout for joy, all *you* upright in heart!

Psalm 33

The Sovereignty of the LORD in Creation and History

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous!
For praise from the upright is beautiful.
2 Praise the LORD with the harp;
Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.



BILLY BLACKWOOD • Homecoming Artist, *The Blackwoods*

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him. | PSALM 28:7

I can never recall a time when music was not a central part of my life. My daddy, James, was a pioneer in gospel music, and music was a way of life for our family. His success certainly paved the way for me to have a career in music as well.

As I grew older and chose my own musical path, it led me away from gospel music and from my walk with the Lord as well. The path I chose turned out to not be what I had envisioned. All that glitters is certainly not gold. I lived the Prodigal Son life, and it was, no doubt, the prayers of my mom and dad and others who loved me that brought me back to a relationship with the Lord and eventually back to gospel music.

For many years now I have jotted Psalm 28:7 after my signature. It has been a life verse for me. "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him." I am so thankful that the Lord has seen fit to fill my heart with a song that is born out of a relationship with Him that far surpasses anything the world has to offer and gives me strength to endure whatever life may bring my way.

3 Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.

4 For the word of the LORD *is* right,
And all His work *is done* in truth.
5 He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

Sing to Him a new song;
play skillfully with a shout of joy.
PSALM 33:3

6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;[a]
He lays up the deep in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
9 For He spoke, and it was *done;*
He commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.
11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart to all generations.
12 Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD,
The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

13 The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.
14 From the place of His dwelling He looks
On all the inhabitants of the earth;
15 He fashions their hearts individually;
He considers all their works.

16 No king *is* saved by the multitude of an army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.
17 A horse *is* a vain hope for safety;
Neither shall it deliver *any* by its great strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* on those who fear Him,
On those who hope in His mercy,
19 To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waits for the LORD;
He *is* our help and our shield.
21 For our heart shall rejoice in Him,
Because we have trusted in His holy name.
22 Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
Just as we hope in You.

Psalm 34

The Happiness of Those Who Trust in God

A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.

I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.
3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
5 They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces were not ashamed.
6 This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him,*
And saved him out of all his troubles.
7 The angel[a] of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.

8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!
9 Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!
There is no want to those who fear Him.
10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger;
But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good *thing.*

33:7 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *in a vessel.* **34:7** [a]Or *Angel*

11 Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
12 Who *is* the man *who* desires life,
And loves *many* days, that he may see good?
13 Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit.
14 Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD *are* on the righteous,
And His ears *are open* to their cry.
16 The face of the LORD *is* against those who do evil,
To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 *The righteous* cry out, and the LORD hears,
And delivers them out of all their troubles.
18 The LORD *is* near to those who have a broken heart,
And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous,
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
20 He guards all his bones;
Not one of them is broken.
21 Evil shall slay the wicked,
And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.
22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants,
And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

Every poet and musician and artist, but for Grace, is drawn away from love of the thing he tells, to love of the telling till, down in Deep Hell, they cannot be interested in God at all but only in what they say about Him.

C.S. LEWIS

Psalm 35

The LORD the Avenger of His People

A Psalm of David.

Plead *my cause,* O LORD, with those who strive with me;
Fight against those who fight against me.



BUDDY MULLINS • Homecoming Artist

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever. | PSALM 30:11, 12

These are verses that hold on to me when I am too weak to stand. I thank God for the promise of His long-lasting favor and the shortness of the dark night's raging storm. Oh, the joy and the peace of the sunrise and the promise of a brand-new day! I can almost hear David singing this whole psalm. He knew about danger. He had been in the dark valley and he felt the fear of being alone. Yet with all that life threw at him, he still sang praises to God and danced for joy. I join with him in proclaiming that God is a good God. I love you, Lord!

2 Take hold of shield and buckler,
And stand up for my help.
3 Also draw out the spear,
And stop those who pursue me.
Say to my soul,
"I *am* your salvation."

4 Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor
Who seek after my life;
Let those be turned back and brought to confusion
Who plot my hurt.
5 Let them be like chaff before the wind,
And let the angel[a] of the LORD chase *them.*
6 Let their way be dark and slippery,
And let the angel of the LORD pursue them.
7 For without cause they have hidden their net for me *in* a pit,
Which they have dug without cause for my life.
8 Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly,
And let his net that he has hidden catch himself;
Into that very destruction let him fall.

9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD;
It shall rejoice in His salvation.
10 All my bones shall say,
"LORD, who *is* like You,
Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him,
Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?"

11 Fierce witnesses rise up;
They ask me *things* that I do not know.
12 They reward me evil for good,
To the sorrow of my soul.
13 But as for me, when they were sick,
My clothing *was* sackcloth;
I humbled myself with fasting;
And my prayer would return to my own heart.
14 I paced about as though *he were* my friend *or* brother;
I bowed down heavily, as one who mourns *for his* mother.

15 But in my adversity they rejoiced
And gathered together;
Attackers gathered against me,
And I did not know *it;*
They tore *at me* and did not cease;
16 With ungodly mockers at feasts
They gnashed at me with their teeth.

17 Lord, how long will You look on?
Rescue me from their destructions,
My precious *life* from the lions.
18 I will give You thanks in the great assembly;
I will praise You among many people.

19 Let them not rejoice over me who are wrongfully my enemies;
Nor let them wink with the eye who hate me without a cause.
20 For they do not speak peace,
But they devise deceitful matters
Against *the* quiet ones in the land.
21 They also opened their mouth wide against me,
And said, "Aha, aha!
Our eyes have seen *it.*"

22 *This* You have seen, O LORD;
Do not keep silence.
O Lord, do not be far from me.
23 Stir up Yourself, and awake to my vindication,
To my cause, my God and my Lord.
24 Vindicate me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness;
And let them not rejoice over me.
25 Let them not say in their hearts,
"Ah, so we would have it!"
Let them not say, "We have swallowed him up."

26 Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion
Who rejoice at my hurt;
Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor
Who exalt themselves against me.

27 Let them shout for joy and be glad,
Who favor my righteous cause;
And let them say continually,
"Let the LORD be magnified,
Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."

35:5 [a]Or *Angel*

28 And my tongue shall speak of Your
righteousness
And of Your praise all the day long.

Psalm 36

Man's Wickedness and God's Perfections

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David
the servant of the LORD.

An oracle within my heart concerning
the transgression of the wicked:
There is no fear of God before
his eyes.
2 For he flatters himself in his
own eyes,
When he finds out his iniquity *and*
when he hates.
3 The words of his mouth *are*
wickedness and deceit;
He has ceased to be wise *and* to do
good.
4 He devises wickedness on his bed;
He sets himself in a way *that is* not
good;
He does not abhor evil.

5 Your mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens;
Your faithfulness *reaches* to the
clouds.
6 Your righteousness *is* like the great
mountains;
Your judgments *are* a great deep;
O LORD, You preserve man and beast.

7 How precious *is* Your lovingkindness,
O God!
Therefore the children of men put
their trust under the shadow of
Your wings.



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will guide you with My eye. | PSALM 32:8

Some beautiful trees in view from our kitchen window are towering cedars, surely planted when the house was built 130 years ago. An ancient oak down in the meadow is silhouetted against rolling hills and sky. There are also a black walnut and a fruit-bearing plum. All are beautiful, all symmetrical, each distinctive, each different from all the others. Good planning, God's planning, went into those trees. I appreciate them.

However, if I left my kitchen and climbed one of those trees to sit up among the branches, I would surely have a different view of them. Those branches would appear to be going every which way. I wouldn't be able to see much of a plan if I were in the middle of the leaves and branches.

For today, I'm going to have faith to believe that life is like that. We're each viewing our own lives from the middle of our own tree. It looks pretty confusing. But God, the planner, steps back and views the life in perspective, seeing its beauty, symmetry, and individuality.

He did the planning and the planting. All I'm doing is growing in His care—trusting His design.

8 They are abundantly satisfied with the
fullness of Your house,
And You give them drink from the river
of Your pleasures.
9 For with You *is* the fountain of life;
In Your light we see light.

10 Oh, continue Your lovingkindness to
those who know You,
And Your righteousness to the upright
in heart.
11 Let not the foot of pride come
against me,
And let not the hand of the wicked
drive me away.
12 There the workers of iniquity have fallen;
They have been cast down and are not
able to rise.

Psalm 37

The Heritage of the Righteous and the Calamity of the Wicked

A Psalm of David.

Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the workers of
iniquity.
2 For they shall soon be cut down like
the grass,
And wither as the green herb.

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His
faithfulness.
4 Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of
your heart.

5 Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.
6 He shall bring forth your
righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently
for Him;
Do not fret because of him who
prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked
schemes to pass.
8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—*it* only *causes* harm.
9 For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the LORD,
They shall inherit the earth.
10 For yet a little while and the wicked
shall be no *more;*
Indeed, you will look carefully for
his place,
But it *shall be* no *more*.
11 But the meek shall inherit the earth,
And shall delight themselves in the
abundance of peace.

12 The wicked plots against the just,
And gnashes at him with his teeth.
13 The Lord laughs at him,
For He sees that his day is coming.
14 The wicked have drawn the sword
And have bent their bow,
To cast down the poor and needy,
To slay those who are of upright conduct.
15 Their sword shall enter their own heart,
And their bows shall be broken.

16 A little that a righteous man has
Is better than the riches of many
wicked.
17 For the arms of the wicked shall be
broken,
But the LORD upholds the righteous.

18 The LORD knows the days of the
upright,
And their inheritance shall be forever.
19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil
time,
And in the days of famine they shall be
satisfied.
20 But the wicked shall perish;
And the enemies of the LORD,
Like the splendor of the meadows,
shall vanish.
Into smoke they shall vanish away.

21 The wicked borrows and does not repay,
But the righteous shows mercy and
gives.
22 For *those* blessed by Him shall inherit
the earth,
But *those* cursed by Him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by
the LORD,
And He delights in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly
cast down;
For the LORD upholds *him with* His hand.

25 I have been young, and *now* am old;
Yet I have not seen the righteous
forsaken,
Nor his descendants begging bread.
26 *He is* ever merciful, and lends;
And his descendants *are* blessed.

27 Depart from evil, and do good;
And dwell forevermore.
28 For the LORD loves justice,
And does not forsake His saints;
They are preserved forever,
But the descendants of the wicked
shall be cut off.
29 The righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell in it forever.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaks
wisdom,
And his tongue talks of justice.
31 The law of his God *is* in his heart;
None of his steps shall slide.

32 The wicked watches the righteous,
And seeks to slay him.
33 The LORD will not leave him in his
hand,
Nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait on the LORD,
And keep His way,
And He shall exalt you to inherit
the land;
When the wicked are cut off, you shall
see *it*.
35 I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a native
green tree.
36 Yet he passed away,[a] and behold,
he *was* no *more;*
Indeed I sought him, but he could not
be found.

37 Mark the blameless *man,* and observe
the upright;
For the future of *that* man *is* peace.
38 But the transgressors shall be
destroyed together;

37:36 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Targum; Syriac and Vulgate read *I passed by*.



DALLAS HOLM • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

Delight yourself also in the LORD; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. | PSALM 37:4

Sitting in a class at Bible college in 1966, the professor asked the mixed class of upper and lower classmen, "What do you want to do when you get out of here?"

Three different upper classmen stood and each responded similarly. "I want to do whatever God wants me to do, go where He wants me to go, and be what He wants me to be." The class seemed to all nod approvingly. I raised my hand and said, "I want to sing for Jesus, make records, be on radio and TV, and travel all over the world." It was hard as a new Christian and a freshman in college to absorb the stares of unbelief from an entire classroom; however, Professor Phillips smiled and said, "Good!"

The future of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous *is*
from the LORD;
He is their strength in the time of trouble.
40 And the LORD shall help them and
deliver them;
He shall deliver them from the wicked,
And save them,
Because they trust in Him.

Psalm 38

Prayer in Time of Chastening

A Psalm of David.
To bring to remembrance.

O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your wrath,
Nor chasten me in Your hot
displeasure!
2 For Your arrows pierce me deeply,
And Your hand presses me down.

3 *There is* no soundness in my flesh
Because of Your anger,
Nor *any* health in my bones
Because of my sin.

The Psalms themselves provide both the ancient resource for this worship and the constant challenge to sing to the Lord a new song.

N.T. WRIGHT

4 For my iniquities have gone over
my head;
Like a heavy burden they are too heavy
for me.
5 My wounds are foul *and* festering
Because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled, I am bowed down
greatly;
I go mourning all the day long.
7 For my loins are full of inflammation,
And *there is* no soundness in my flesh.
8 I am feeble and severely broken;
I groan because of the turmoil of my
heart.

9 Lord, all my desire *is* before You;
And my sighing is not hidden from You.

In my years of travel, I've met those other three classmates. One is a teacher, one a police officer, and the other a factory worker. All honorable vocations but probably not what they had in mind while studying Greek, Hebrew, and New Testament Survey. Yet, for over forty years now I've done exactly what I said I wanted to do. How can this be?

Years ago someone showed me a scripture that explains it all: Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." David Wilkerson once said, "Get specific with God, and He'll get specific with you." My classmates surely loved the Lord but perhaps had no gameplan or had never explored their own hearts' desires or more importantly God's specific desires and designs for them.

Some read this verse in Psalms to mean that if you'll delight yourself in the Lord, He'll reward you with things you desire. This is not altogether inaccurate but let's look at it another way. Scripture teaches, "The heart is deceitful above all things . . . who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart" (Jer. 17:9, 10). Think of this: as we delight ourselves in Him, we will have revealed to us what our own heart desires. Surely this is the greater gift!

But I am poor and needy;
yet the LORD *thinks upon me.*
You are my help and my deliverer;
do not delay, O my God.
PSALM 40:17

Why do we let people intimidate us into compromising our integrity and forget the God who will endure forever? No person's opinion, no matter how influential or insistent, will last. No institution or organization or government will last. No hierarchy, no fame, no limelight will burn on for long. All will wield their influences for a time, but God will uphold the righteous with His right hand. All lights of earth will dim and flicker out, but the fire of the Lord will burn brighter until the perfect day.

So often the impulse is to cover and hide in the darkness, but the only safe hiding place is the intense, consuming light of God. It will shelter us if we're humbled by our insufficiencies and at the same time scorch the arrogant. Even when we fail or use poor judgment, the Lord delights in the hunger of our souls for Him. *This* is His delight, not our accomplishments or performances. Delight yourself in Him. It makes His great heart glad and makes all other faces fade in the light of His enduring presence.



10 My heart pants, my strength fails me;
As for the light of my eyes, it also has
gone from me.

11 My loved ones and my friends stand
aloof from my plague,
And my relatives stand afar off.
12 Those also who seek my life lay snares
for me;
Those who seek my hurt speak of
destruction,
And plan deception all the day long.

13 But I, like a deaf *man,* do not hear;
And *I am* like a mute *who* does not
open his mouth.
14 Thus I am like a man who does not
hear,
And in whose mouth *is* no response.

15 For in You, O LORD, I hope;
You will hear, O Lord my God.
16 For I said, *"Hear me,* lest they rejoice
over me,
Lest, when my foot slips, they exalt
themselves against me."

17 For I *am* ready to fall,
And my sorrow *is* continually before me.
18 For I will declare my iniquity;
I will be in anguish over my sin.
19 But my enemies *are* vigorous, *and* they
are strong;
And those who hate me wrongfully
have multiplied.
20 Those also who render evil for good,
They are my adversaries, because I
follow *what is* good.

21 Do not forsake me, O LORD;
O my God, be not far from me!
22 Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!

Psalm 39

Prayer for Wisdom and Forgiveness

To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun.
A Psalm of David.

I said, "I will guard my ways,
Lest I sin with my tongue;
I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle,
While the wicked are before me."

2 I was mute with silence,
I held my peace *even* from good;
And my sorrow was stirred up.
3 My heart was hot within me;
While I was musing, the fire burned.
Then I spoke with my tongue:

4 "LORD, make me to know my end,
And what *is* the measure of my days,
That I may know how frail I *am*.
5 Indeed, You have made my days *as* handbreadths,
And my age *is* as nothing before You;
Certainly every man at his best state *is* but vapor.
Selah
6 Surely every man walks about like a shadow;
Surely they busy themselves in vain;
He heaps up *riches*,
And does not know who will gather them.

7 "And now, Lord, what do I wait for?
My hope *is* in You.
8 Deliver me from all my transgressions;
Do not make me the reproach of the foolish.
9 I was mute, I did not open my mouth,
Because it was You who did *it*.
10 Remove Your plague from me;
I am consumed by the blow of Your hand.
11 When with rebukes You correct man for iniquity,
You make his beauty melt away like a moth;
Surely every man *is* vapor.
Selah

12 "Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And give ear to my cry;
Do not be silent at my tears;
For I *am* a stranger with You,
A sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.
13 Remove Your gaze from me, that I may regain strength,
Before I go away and am no more."

He has put a new song in my mouth—praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD.
PSALM 40:3

Psalm 40

Faith Persevering in Trial

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
3 He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see *it* and fear,
And will trust in the LORD.

4 Blessed *is* that man who makes the LORD his trust,
And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
5 Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works
Which You have done;
And Your thoughts toward us
Cannot be recounted to You in order;
If I would declare and speak *of them,*
They are more than can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;
My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.
7 Then I said, "Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.
8 I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law *is* within my heart."

9 I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness
In the great assembly;
Indeed, I do not restrain my lips,
O LORD, You Yourself know.

10 I have not hidden Your righteousness
within my heart;
I have declared Your faithfulness and
Your salvation;
I have not concealed Your
lovingkindness and Your truth
From the great assembly.

11 Do not withhold Your tender mercies
from me, O LORD;
Let Your lovingkindness and Your
truth continually preserve me.
12 For innumerable evils have
surrounded me;
My iniquities have overtaken me, so
that I am not able to look up;
They are more than the hairs of my
head;
Therefore my heart fails me.

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me;
O LORD, make haste to help me!
14 Let them be ashamed and brought to
mutual confusion
Who seek to destroy my life;
Let them be driven backward and
brought to dishonor
Who wish me evil.
15 Let them be confounded because of
their shame,
Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"

16 Let all those who seek You rejoice and
be glad in You;
Let such as love Your salvation say
continually,
"The LORD be magnified!"
17 But I *am* poor and needy;
Yet the LORD thinks upon me.
You *are* my help and my deliverer;
Do not delay, O my God.

Psalm 41

The Blessing and Suffering of the Godly

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of
David.

Blessed *is* he who considers the poor;
The LORD will deliver him in time of
trouble.
2 The LORD will preserve him and keep
him alive,
And he will be blessed on the earth;
You will not deliver him to the will of
his enemies.
3 The LORD will strengthen him on his
bed of illness;
You will sustain him on his sickbed.

4 I said, "LORD, be merciful to me;
Heal my soul, for I have sinned
against You."
5 My enemies speak evil of me:
"When will he die, and his name perish?"
6 And if he comes to see *me,* he
speaks lies;
His heart gathers iniquity to itself;
When he goes out, he tells *it.*

Man is made in the image of God, and therefore man not only can love and think and feel emotion, but also has the capacity to create. Being in the image of God, we are called upon to have creativity.

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER

7 All who hate me whisper together
against me;
Against me they devise my hurt.
8 "An evil disease," *they say,* "clings to
him.
And *now* that he lies down, he will rise
up no more."
9 Even my own familiar friend in whom I
trusted,
Who ate my bread,
Has lifted up *his* heel against me.

10 But You, O LORD, be merciful to me,
and raise me up,
That I may repay them.
11 By this I know that You are well
pleased with me,
Because my enemy does not triumph
over me.
12 As for me, You uphold me in my
integrity,
And set me before Your face forever.

13 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
Amen and Amen.

BOOK TWO: Psalms 42—72

Psalm 42

Yearning for God in the Midst of Distresses

To the Chief Musician.
A Contemplation[a] of the sons of Korah.

As the deer pants for the water brooks,
So pants my soul for You, O God.
2 My soul thirsts for God, for the
living God.
When shall I come and appear
before God?[a]
3 My tears have been my food day
and night,
While they continually say to me,
"Where *is* your God?"

4 When I remember these *things,*
I pour out my soul within me.
For I used to go with the multitude;
I went with them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise,
With a multitude that kept a
pilgrim feast.

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And *why* are you disquieted
within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
For the help of His countenance.[a]

6 O my God,[a] my soul is cast down
within me;
Therefore I will remember You from
the land of the Jordan,
And from the heights of Hermon,
From the Hill Mizar.
7 Deep calls unto deep at the noise
of Your waterfalls;
All Your waves and billows have
gone over me.
8 The LORD will command His
lovingkindness in the daytime,
And in the night His song *shall be*
with me—
A prayer to the God of my life.

9 I will say to God my Rock,
"Why have You forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning because of the
oppression of the enemy?"
10 *As* with a breaking of my bones,
My enemies reproach me,
While they say to me all day long,
"Where *is* your God?"

11 Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and
my God.

The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me—a prayer to the God of my life.
PSALM 42:8

Psalm 43

Prayer to God in Time of Trouble

Vindicate me, O God,
And plead my cause against an
ungodly nation;
Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and
unjust man!
2 For You *are* the God of my strength;
Why do You cast me off?
Why do I go mourning because of the
oppression of the enemy?

3 Oh, send out Your light and Your truth!
Let them lead me;
Let them bring me to Your holy hill
And to Your tabernacle.
4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
To God my exceeding joy;
And on the harp I will praise You,
O God, my God.

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and
my God.

42:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil* **42:2** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *I see the face of God.* **42:5** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; a few Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *The help of my countenance, my God.* **42:6** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; a few Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate put *my God* at the end of verse 5.

Psalm 44

Redemption Remembered in Present Dishonor

To the Chief Musician.
A Contemplation[a] of the sons of Korah.

We have heard with our ears, O God,
Our fathers have told us,
The deeds You did in their days,
In days of old:
2 You drove out the nations with
Your hand,
But them You planted;
You afflicted the peoples, and cast
them out.
3 For they did not gain possession of the
land by their own sword,
Nor did their own arm save them;
But it was Your right hand, Your arm,
and the light of Your countenance,
Because You favored them.

4 You are my King, O God;[a]
Command[b] victories for Jacob.
5 Through You we will push down our
enemies;
Through Your name we will trample
those who rise up against us.
6 For I will not trust in my bow,
Nor shall my sword save me.
7 But You have saved us from our enemies,
And have put to shame those who
hated us.
8 In God we boast all day long,
And praise Your name forever.
Selah

9 But You have cast *us* off and put us
to shame,
And You do not go out with our armies.
10 You make us turn back from the enemy,
And those who hate us have taken
spoil for themselves.
11 You have given us up like sheep
intended for food,
And have scattered us among the
nations.
12 You sell Your people for *next to*
nothing,
And are not enriched by selling them.

13 You make us a reproach to our
neighbors,
A scorn and a derision to those all
around us.
14 You make us a byword among the
nations,
A shaking of the head among the
peoples.
15 My dishonor *is* continually before me,
And the shame of my face has
covered me,
16 Because of the voice of him who
reproaches and reviles,
Because of the enemy and the avenger.

17 All this has come upon us;
But we have not forgotten You,
Nor have we dealt falsely with Your
covenant.
18 Our heart has not turned back,
Nor have our steps departed from
Your way;
19 But You have severely broken us in the
place of jackals,
And covered us with the shadow
of death.

20 If we had forgotten the name of our God,
Or stretched out our hands to a
foreign god,
21 Would not God search this out?
For He knows the secrets of the heart.
22 Yet for Your sake we are killed all
day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the
slaughter.

44:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil* **44:4** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *and my God*. [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Who commands*.



23 Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord?
Arise! Do not cast *us* off forever.
24 Why do You hide Your face,
And forget our affliction and our oppression?
25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust;
Our body clings to the ground.
26 Arise for our help,
And redeem us for Your mercies' sake.

Psalm 45

The Glories of the Messiah and His Bride

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies."[a] A Contemplation[b] of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love.

My heart is overflowing with a good theme;
I recite my composition concerning the King;
My tongue *is* the pen of a ready writer.

2 You are fairer than the sons of men;
Grace is poured upon Your lips;
Therefore God has blessed You forever.
3 Gird Your sword upon *Your* thigh, O Mighty One,
With Your glory and Your majesty.
4 And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, *and* righteousness;
And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things.
5 Your arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the King's enemies;
The peoples fall under You.

6 Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom.
7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.
8 All Your garments *are scented* with myrrh and aloes *and* cassia,
Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad.
9 Kings' daughters *are* among Your honorable women;
At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

10 Listen, O daughter,
Consider and incline your ear;
Forget your own people also, and your father's house;
11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty;
Because He *is* your Lord, worship Him.
12 And the daughter of Tyre *will come* with a gift;
The rich among the people will seek your favor.

13 The royal daughter *is* all glorious within *the palace;*
Her clothing *is* woven with gold.
14 She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors;
The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.
15 With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought;
They shall enter the King's palace.

16 Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons,
Whom You shall make princes in all the earth.
17 I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations;
Therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever.

Psalm 46

God the Refuge of His People and Conqueror of the Nations

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of the sons of Korah. A Song for Alamoth.

God *is* our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
2 Therefore we will not fear,
Even though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

45:title [a]Hebrew *Shoshannim* [b]Hebrew *Maschil*

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

PSALM 46:1, 2

Martin Luther was a man who knew the magnitude of a strong fortress in battle. As a German priest in 1517, he began a revolution that has had widespread, lasting effect on the world, even today. It all started when Luther wrote a letter to his own bishop, including a report refuting the notion in Roman Catholicism that a person couldn't be saved through faith in Christ alone. Rather, the church was preaching that a person must be saved by charity and good works in addition to faith, and not only that, but if a person did not perform such works, he or she could simply substitute them through financial contributions called "indulgences." Incidentally, those contributions would be going to fund the Pope's elaborate building project, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. As a student of theology, a former monk, and a current priest, Martin Luther knew the Scriptures, and therefore understood these ideas to be a false gospel.

The problem was, in those days, most people didn't have access to the Scriptures like we do now. For one thing, they were not in modern language, but in ancient Latin (the language of the church), Greek, and Hebrew. For another, books weren't printed in mass quantities at that time, as innovations to the printing press were just being developed. So for a common believer, all they knew about God's Word was what they were taught by the church, and if the church wasn't getting it right, how were the people supposed to know the gospel? As the apostle Paul states in Romans, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!' " (10:14, 15).

Thanks to the work of Martin Luther and his friends, the world began to hear beautiful things. Some of Luther's friends got a hold of the report from his letter to the bishop (now known as *The 95 Theses*), translated it from Latin to German, made hundreds of copies, and distributed them throughout Germany. Before long, Luther's work spread to all of Europe, the church in Rome included. Eventually, the Pope threatened to kick Martin Luther out of the Roman Catholic Church if he didn't back down. But Luther kept fighting. Even after he was excommunicated from the church, the government declared him an outlaw and banned his writing, and even said that anyone who found him would be permitted to kill him without consequence. But Luther kept fighting.

Martin Luther continued in this uphill battle, eventually returning to Germany and leading the Protestant Reformation, translating the Bible into the German language that lay people could understand, transforming worship services so that individuals could participate in a way they understood, and developing curriculum for everyone to grow in their understanding of God's Word.

It's no wonder that in all of this conflict, Luther found particular comfort and inspiration in Psalm 46. With all his emphasis on believers knowing the Word of God, Martin Luther knew the power of music to aid in that. Luther stated, "I wish to compose sacred hymns so that the Word of God may dwell among the people also by means of songs." As a result, he wrote dozens of hymns based on Scripture, including "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," based on Psalm 46. His co-laborer and friend, Philipp Melanchthon said that in their darkest times, Luther would say to him, "Come Philipp, let's sing the forty-sixth Psalm," before erupting into "A Mighty Fortress."

In life's hard battles, no matter what happens, we must remember, "The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever." Amen and amen!

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Martin Luther | 1529

1. *A mighty fortress* is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

2. *Did we in* our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

3. *And though this* world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

4. *That word above* all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

3 *Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with
its swelling.
Selah

4 *There is* a river whose streams shall
make glad the city of God,
The holy *place* of the tabernacle of
the Most High.
5 God *is* in the midst of her, she shall
not be moved;
God shall help her, just at the break
of dawn.
6 The nations raged, the kingdoms
were moved;
He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

7 The LORD of hosts *is* with us;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge.
Selah

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD,
Who has made desolations in the
earth.
9 He makes wars cease to the end of
the earth;
He breaks the bow and cuts the
spear in two;
He burns the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I *am* God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!

11 The LORD of hosts *is* with us;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge.
Selah

Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
PSALM 47:6

Psalm 47

Praise to God, the Ruler of the Earth

To the Chief Musician.
A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples!
Shout to God with the voice of
triumph!
2 For the LORD Most High *is* awesome;
He is a great King over all the earth.
3 He will subdue the peoples under us,
And the nations under our feet.
4 He will choose our inheritance for us,
The excellence of Jacob whom He loves.
Selah

5 God has gone up with a shout,
The LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
6 Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
7 For God *is* the King of all the earth;
Sing praises with understanding.

8 God reigns over the nations;
God sits on His holy throne.
9 The princes of the people have
gathered together,
The people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth *belong*
to God;
He is greatly exalted.

Psalm 48

The Glory of God in Zion

A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be
praised
In the city of our God,
In His holy mountain.
2 Beautiful in elevation,
The joy of the whole earth,
Is Mount Zion *on* the sides of the north,
The city of the great King.
3 God *is* in her palaces;
He is known as her refuge.

4 For behold, the kings assembled,
They passed by together.
5 They saw *it, and* so they marveled;
They were troubled, they hastened away.
6 Fear took hold of them there,
And pain, as of a woman in birth pangs,
7 *As when* You break the ships of Tarshish
With an east wind.

8 As we have heard,

For God is the King of all the earth;
sing praises with understanding.
PSALM 47:7

So we have seen
In the city of the LORD of hosts,
In the city of our God:
God will establish it forever.
Selah

9 We have thought, O God, on Your
lovingkindness,
In the midst of Your temple.
10 According to Your name, O God,
So *is* Your praise to the ends of the earth;
Your right hand is full of
righteousness.
11 Let Mount Zion rejoice,
Let the daughters of Judah be glad,
Because of Your judgments.

12 Walk about Zion,
And go all around her.
Count her towers;
13 Mark well her bulwarks;
Consider her palaces;
That you may tell *it* to the generation
following.
14 For this *is* God,
Our God forever and ever;
He will be our guide
Even to death.[a]

Psalm 49

The Confidence of the Foolish

To the Chief Musician.
A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

Hear this, all peoples;
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
2 Both low and high,
Rich and poor together.

48:14 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Syriac; Septuagint and Vulgate read *Forever*.



SUE BUCHANAN • Author, *Homecoming Magazine* Contributor

Be still, and know that I am God. | PSALM 46:10

There's an Annie Dillard quote that reads, "I woke in bits, like all children, piecemeal over the years. I discovered myself and the world, forgot them, and discovered them again." That was true for me. I made discoveries, forgot them, and then discovered them again. And that includes spiritual truths as well. I learned the "Be still and know" verse as a small child, and for many years I thought it was my parents' way of shushing the rambunctiousness out of me! In fact, I'm still wondering about that!

Just now, at the ripe age of *none of your business,* the "know" part of the verse is finally sinking in. It didn't happen in the "I-got-it-all-together" times of my life, but in the difficult days: an unwanted divorce, the death of my daughter, and things too personal to mention. It was when I came to the end of me, and ran out of suggestions and demands for Him, that God invited me to stillness . . . to quiet. It was then that He began to draw me to Himself and let me know, first hand, by His presence . . . *by His presence!* . . . the reality of "I AM God!" An old song lyric resonates in my spirit and sings itself through my day: "He walks with me and He talks with me and He tells me I am His own."

3 My mouth shall speak wisdom,
And the meditation of my heart *shall give* understanding.
4 I will incline my ear to a proverb;
I will disclose my dark saying on the harp.

5 Why should I fear in the days of evil,
When the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?
6 Those who trust in their wealth
And boast in the multitude of their riches,
7 None *of them* can by any means redeem *his* brother,
Nor give to God a ransom for him—
8 For the redemption of their souls *is* costly,
And it shall cease forever—
9 That he should continue to live eternally,
And not see the Pit.

10 For he sees wise men die;
Likewise the fool and the senseless person perish,
And leave their wealth to others.
11 Their inner thought *is that* their houses *will last* forever,[a]
Their dwelling places to all generations;
They call *their* lands after their own names.
12 Nevertheless man, *though* in honor, does not remain;[a]
He is like the beasts *that* perish.

13 This is the way of those who *are* foolish,
And of their posterity who approve their sayings.
Selah
14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave;
Death shall feed on them;
The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;
And their beauty shall be consumed in the grave, far from their dwelling.
15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave,
For He shall receive me.
Selah

16 Do not be afraid when one becomes rich,
When the glory of his house is increased;
17 For when he dies he shall carry nothing away;
His glory shall not descend after him.
18 Though while he lives he blesses himself
(For *men* will praise you when you do well for yourself),
19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers;
They shall never see light.
20 A man *who is* in honor, yet does not understand,
Is like the beasts *that* perish.

Psalm 50

God the Righteous Judge

A Psalm of Asaph.

The Mighty One, God the LORD,
Has spoken and called the earth
From the rising of the sun to its going down.
2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God will shine forth.
3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent;
A fire shall devour before Him,
And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above,
And to the earth, that He may judge His people:
5 "Gather My saints together to Me,
Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."
6 Let the heavens declare His righteousness,
For God Himself *is* Judge.
Selah

7 "Hear, O My people, and I will speak,
O Israel, and I will testify against you;
I *am* God, your God!
8 I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices
Or your burnt offerings,
Which are continually before Me.
9 I will not take a bull from your house,
Nor goats out of your folds.

49:11 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *Their graves shall be their houses forever.* **49:12** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *understand* (compare verse 20).

10 For every beast of the forest *is* Mine,
And the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know all the birds of the mountains,
And the wild beasts of the field *are* Mine.

12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you;
For the world *is* Mine, and all its
fullness.
13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls,
Or drink the blood of goats?
14 Offer to God thanksgiving,
And pay your vows to the Most High.
15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall
glorify Me."

16 But to the wicked God says:
"What *right* have you to declare My
statutes,
Or take My covenant in your mouth,
17 Seeing you hate instruction
And cast My words behind you?
18 When you saw a thief, you consented[a]
with him,
And have been a partaker with
adulterers.
19 You give your mouth to evil,
And your tongue frames deceit.
20 You sit *and* speak against your brother;
You slander your own mother's son.
21 These *things* you have done, and I
kept silent;
You thought that I was altogether
like you;
But I will rebuke you,
And set *them* in order before your eyes.

22 "Now consider this, you who forget God,
Lest I tear *you* in pieces,
And *there be* none to deliver:
23 Whoever offers praise glorifies Me;
And to him who orders *his* conduct *aright*
I will show the salvation of God."

Psalm 51

A Prayer of Repentance

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your
tender mercies,

50:18 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *ran*.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. | PSALM 55:22

It appears that the Lord places a burden on us so that we may place it on Him. The heavier the burden He places on me, the more likely I will be to turn it over to Him. If it is only a light burden, in my foolishness I may think I will be able to handle it on my own. When it becomes so heavy that it is impossible for me, I run from beneath it and cast the burden and myself upon the Lord. So that I will trust Him, I believe He often adds to the burden to lighten my load.

Blot out my transgressions.
2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin *is* always before me.
4 Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done *this* evil in Your sight—
That You may be found just when
You speak,[a]
And blameless when You judge.

I wonder if there was ever a time when true spiritual worship was at a lower ebb. To great sections of the church, the art of worship has been lost entirely, and in its place has come that strange and foreign thing called the "program." This word has been borrowed from the stage and applied with sad wisdom to the public service which now passes for worship among us.

A. W. TOZER

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.
6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward
parts,
And in the hidden *part* You will make
me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be
clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than
snow.
8 Make me hear joy and gladness,
That the bones You have broken may
rejoice.
9 Hide Your face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within
me.
11 Do not cast me away from Your
presence,
And do not take Your Holy Spirit
from me.

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

PSALM 51:14

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me *by Your* generous Spirit.
13 *Then* I will teach transgressors
Your ways,
And sinners shall be converted to You.

14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed,
O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your
righteousness.
15 O Lord, open my lips,
And my mouth shall show forth Your
praise.
16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else
I would give *it;*
You do not delight in burnt offering.
17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken
spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise.

18 Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion;
Build the walls of Jerusalem.
19 Then You shall be pleased with the
sacrifices of righteousness,
With burnt offering and whole burnt
offering;
Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

Psalm 52

The End of the Wicked and the Peace of the Godly

To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation[a] of David when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul, and said to him, "David has gone to the house of Ahimelech."

Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?
The goodness of God *endures*
continually.

51:4 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *in Your words.*
52:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

2 Your tongue devises destruction,
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
3 You love evil more than good,
Lying rather than speaking
righteousness.
Selah
4 You love all devouring words,
You deceitful tongue.

5 God shall likewise destroy you
forever;
He shall take you away, and pluck you
out of *your* dwelling place,
And uproot you from the land of the
living.
Selah
6 The righteous also shall see and fear,
And shall laugh at him, *saying,*
7 "Here is the man *who* did not make God
his strength,
But trusted in the abundance of his
riches,
And strengthened himself in his
wickedness."

8 But I *am* like a green olive tree in the
house of God;
I trust in the mercy of God forever
and ever.
9 I will praise You forever,
Because You have done *it;*
And in the presence of Your saints
I will wait on Your name, for *it is* good.

Psalm 53

Folly of the Godless, and the Restoration of Israel

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Mahalath." A Contemplation[a] of David.

The fool has said in his heart,
"*There is* no God."
They are corrupt, and have done
abominable iniquity;
There is none who does good.

2 God looks down from heaven upon the
children of men,
To see if there are *any* who understand,
who seek God.
3 Every one of them has turned aside;
They have together become corrupt;
There is none who does good,
No, not one.

4 Have the workers of iniquity no
knowledge,
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread,
And do not call upon God?
5 There they are in great fear
Where no fear was,
For God has scattered the bones of
him who encamps against you;
You have put *them* to shame,
Because God has despised them.

6 Oh, that the salvation of Israel would
come out of Zion!
When God brings back the captivity
of His people,
Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

Psalm 54

Answered Prayer for Deliverance from Adversaries

To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments.[a] A Contemplation[b] of David when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, "Is David not hiding with us?"

Save me, O God, by Your name,
And vindicate me by Your strength.
2 Hear my prayer, O God;
Give ear to the words of my mouth.
3 For strangers have risen up
against me,
And oppressors have sought after
my life;
They have not set God before them.
Selah
4 Behold, God *is* my helper;
The Lord *is* with those who uphold
my life.

5 He will repay my enemies for their evil.
Cut them off in Your truth.

6 I will freely sacrifice to You;
I will praise Your name, O LORD, for *it*
is good.
7 For He has delivered me out of all
trouble;
And my eye has seen *its desire* upon my
enemies.

53:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil* **54:title** [a]Hebrew *neginoth* [b]Hebrew *Maschil*

Psalm 55

Trust in God Concerning the Treachery of Friends

To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments.[a] A Contemplation[b] of David.

Give ear to my prayer, O God,
And do not hide Yourself from my supplication.
2 Attend to me, and hear me;
I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily,
3 Because of the voice of the enemy,
Because of the oppression of the wicked;
For they bring down trouble upon me,
And in wrath they hate me.

4 My heart is severely pained within me,
And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
5 Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me,
And horror has overwhelmed me.
6 So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.
7 Indeed, I would wander far off,
And remain in the wilderness.
Selah
8 I would hasten my escape
From the windy storm *and* tempest."

9 Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their tongues,
For I have seen violence and strife in the city.
10 Day and night they go around it on its walls;
Iniquity and trouble *are* also in the midst of it.
11 Destruction *is* in its midst;
Oppression and deceit do not depart from its streets.

12 For *it is* not an enemy *who* reproaches me;
Then I could bear *it.*
Nor *is it* one *who* hates me who has exalted *himself* against me;
Then I could hide from him.
13 But *it was* you, a man my equal,
My companion and my acquaintance.
14 We took sweet counsel together,
And walked to the house of God in the throng.

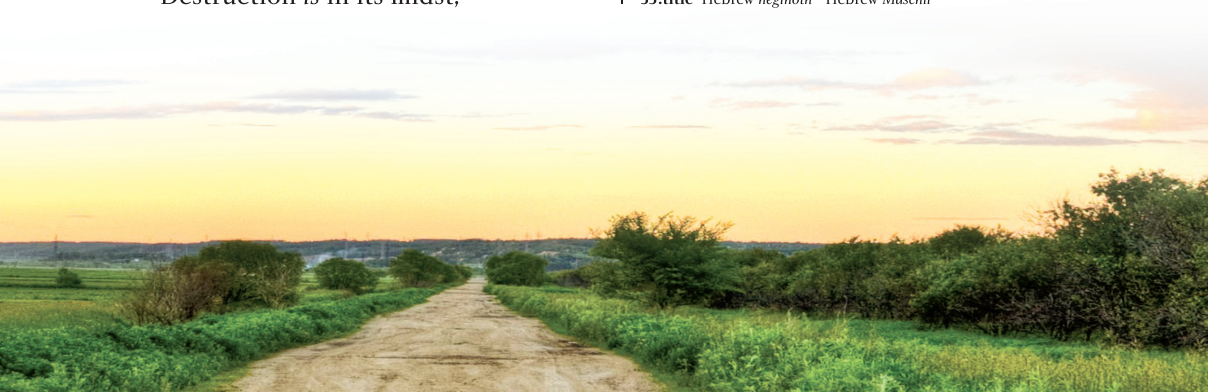
15 Let death seize them;
Let them go down alive into hell,
For wickedness *is* in their dwellings *and* among them.

16 As for me, I will call upon God,
And the LORD shall save me.
17 Evening and morning and at noon
I will pray, and cry aloud,
And He shall hear my voice.
18 He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me,
For there were many against me.
19 God will hear, and afflict them,
Even He who abides from of old.
Selah
Because they do not change,
Therefore they do not fear God.

20 He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him;
He has broken his covenant.
21 *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter,
But war *was* in his heart;
His words were softer than oil,
Yet they *were* drawn swords.

22 Cast your burden on the LORD,

55:title [a]Hebrew *neginoth* [b]Hebrew *Maschil*



And He shall sustain you;
He shall never permit the righteous to
be moved.

23 But You, O God, shall bring them down
to the pit of destruction;
Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall
not live out half their days;
But I will trust in You.

Psalm 56

Prayer for Relief from Tormentors

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Silent Dove in Distant Lands."[a] A Michtam of David when the Philistines captured him in Gath.

Be merciful to me, O God, for man
would swallow me up;
Fighting all day he oppresses me.
2 My enemies would hound *me* all day,
For *there are* many who fight against
me, O Most High.

3 Whenever I am afraid,
I will trust in You.
4 In God (I will praise His word),
In God I have put my trust;
I will not fear.
What can flesh do to me?

5 All day they twist my words;
All their thoughts *are* against me
for evil.
6 They gather together,
They hide, they mark my steps,
When they lie in wait for my life.
7 Shall they escape by iniquity?
In anger cast down the peoples, O God!

8 You number my wanderings;
Put my tears into Your bottle;
Are they not in Your book?
9 When I cry out *to You,*
Then my enemies will turn back;
This I know, because God *is* for me.
10 In God (I will praise *His* word),
In the LORD (I will praise *His* word),
11 In God I have put my trust;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?

12 Vows *made* to You *are binding* upon me,
O God;

56:title [a]Hebrew *Jonath Elem Rechokim*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. | PSALM 67:1, 2

This is one of the most missionary of all the Psalms. It begins and ends the same way. It begins with the truth that the Lord causes His face to shine on us in order that His way would be known on the earth. That is missions. It ends with the same wonderful truth. "God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him." When we live in the blessing of the Lord, our lives become redemptive. Oh, that I may run after His blessing rather than running after those who need so desperately to know Him. The more His face shines on me and His blessing rests upon me, the more the ends of the earth will see Him manifested through my life. Evangelism is a fruit of His grace and blessing on the Christian.

I will render praises to You,
13 For You have delivered my soul from death.
Have You not *kept* my feet from falling,
That I may walk before God
In the light of the living?

Psalm 57

Prayer for Safety from Enemies

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy."[a] A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into the cave.

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!
For my soul trusts in You;
And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge,
Until *these* calamities have passed by.

2 I will cry out to God Most High,
To God who performs *all things* for me.
3 He shall send from heaven and save me;
He reproaches the one who would swallow me up.
Selah
God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.

4 My soul *is* among lions;
I lie *among* the sons of men
Who are set on fire,
Whose teeth *are* spears and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.
5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Your glory *be* above all the earth.

6 They have prepared a net for my steps;
My soul is bowed down;
They have dug a pit before me;
Into the midst of it they *themselves* have fallen.
Selah
7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and give praise.

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise.
PSALM 57:7

8 Awake, my glory!
Awake, lute and harp!
I will awaken the dawn.

9 I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing to You among the nations.
10 For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens,
And Your truth unto the clouds.

11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Your glory *be* above all the earth.

I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations.
PSALM 57:9

Psalm 58

The Just Judgment of the Wicked

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy."[a] A Michtam of David.

Do you indeed speak righteousness, you silent ones?
Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men?
2 No, in heart you work wickedness;
You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth.

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb;
They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.
4 Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent;
They are like the deaf cobra *that* stops its ear,
5 Which will not heed the voice of charmers,
Charming ever so skillfully.

6 Break their teeth in their mouth, O God!
Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!
7 Let them flow away as waters *which* run continually;

57:title [a]Hebrew *Al Tashcheth* **58:title** [a]Hebrew *Al Tashcheth*

O God, You are my God;
early will I seek You;
my soul thirsts for You;
my flesh longs for You in a dry and
thirsty land where there is no water.
So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,
to see Your power and Your glory.
PSALM 63:1, 2

"Early will I seek You." First. Before other alternatives for a cure, for joy, for answers, for directions. The sooner I seek You, Lord, the sooner I will correct my course, the sooner I will be well, the sooner I will recover from sadness, the less perplexed and lost I will feel, the more certainty I will have for taking the next step.

Too often I have sought You late in the game. After a problem arises, after I have lost my direction, after I am bewildered and confused is not the best time to seek You, although if I seek You then You still hear me. But before the damage—early—is the best time. *Then* you restore my joy . . . early.

When he bends *his bow,*
Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces.
8 *Let them be* like a snail which melts
away as it goes,
Like a stillborn child of a woman, that
they may not see the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel *the burning*
thorns,
He shall take them away as with a
whirlwind,
As in His living and burning wrath.
10 The righteous shall rejoice when he
sees the vengeance;
He shall wash his feet in the blood of
the wicked,
11 So that men will say,
"Surely *there is* a reward for the righteous;
Surely He is God who judges in the
earth."

Psalm 59

The Assured Judgment of the Wicked

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy."[a] A Michtam of David when Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill him.

Deliver me from my enemies,
O my God;
Defend me from those who rise up
against me.
2 Deliver me from the workers of
iniquity,
And save me from bloodthirsty men.

3 For look, they lie in wait for my life;
The mighty gather against me,
Not *for* my transgression nor *for* my
sin, O LORD.
4 They run and prepare themselves
through no fault *of mine.*

Awake to help me, and behold!
5 You therefore, O LORD God of hosts,
the God of Israel,
Awake to punish all the nations;
Do not be merciful to any wicked
transgressors.

Selah

59:title [a]Hebrew *Al Tashcheth*

6 At evening they return,
They growl like a dog,
And go all around the city.
7 Indeed, they belch with their mouth;
Swords *are* in their lips;
For *they say,* "Who hears?"

8 But You, O LORD, shall laugh at them;
You shall have all the nations in derision.
9 I will wait for You, O You his Strength;[a]
For God *is* my defense.
10 My God of mercy[a] shall come to meet me;
God shall let me see *my desire* on my enemies.

11 Do not slay them, lest my people forget;
Scatter them by Your power,
And bring them down,
O Lord our shield.
12 *For* the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips,
Let them even be taken in their pride,
And for the cursing and lying *which* they speak.
13 Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them,*
That they *may* not *be;*
And let them know that God rules in Jacob
To the ends of the earth.
Selah

14 And at evening they return,
They growl like a dog,
And go all around the city.
15 They wander up and down for food,
And howl[a] if they are not satisfied.

16 But I will sing of Your power;
Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning;
For You have been my defense
And refuge in the day of my trouble.

But I will sing of Your power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; for You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble.
PSALM 59:16

To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, My God of mercy.
PSALM 59:17

17 To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises;
For God *is* my defense,
My God of mercy.

Psalm 60

Urgent Prayer for the Restored Favor of God

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Lily of the Testimony."[a] A Michtam of David. For teaching. When he fought against Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah, and Joab returned and killed twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

O God, You have cast us off;
You have broken us down;
You have been displeased;
Oh, restore us again!
2 You have made the earth tremble;
You have broken it;
Heal its breaches, for it is shaking.
3 You have shown Your people hard things;
You have made us drink the wine of confusion.

4 You have given a banner to those who fear You,
That it may be displayed because of the truth.
Selah
5 That Your beloved may be delivered,
Save *with* Your right hand, and hear me.

6 God has spoken in His holiness:
"I will rejoice;
I will divide Shechem
And measure out the Valley of Succoth.
7 Gilead *is* Mine, and Manasseh *is* Mine;
Ephraim also *is* the helmet for My head;

59:9 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Syriac; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *my Strength.* **59:10** [a]Following Qere; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *My God, His mercy;* Kethib, some Hebrew manuscripts and Targum read *O God, my mercy;* Syriac reads *O God, Your mercy.* **59:15** [a]Following Septuagint and Vulgate; Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Targum read *spend the night.*
60:title [a]Hebrew *Shushan Eduth*

Judah *is* My lawgiver.
8 Moab *is* My washpot;
Over Edom I will cast My shoe;
Philistia, shout in triumph because of Me."

9 Who will bring me *to* the strong city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
10 *Is it* not You, O God, *who* cast us off?
And You, O God, *who* did not go out with our armies?
11 Give us help from trouble,
For the help of man *is* useless.
12 Through God we will do valiantly,
For *it is* He *who* shall tread down our enemies.[a]

Psalm 61

Assurance of God's Eternal Protection

To the Chief Musician. On a stringed instrument.[a] *A Psalm* of David.

Hear my cry, O God;
Attend to my prayer.
2 From the end of the earth I will cry to You,
When my heart is overwhelmed;

So I will sing praise to Your name forever, that I may daily perform my vows.
PSALM 61:8

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

3 For You have been a shelter for me,
A strong tower from the enemy.
4 I will abide in Your tabernacle forever;
I will trust in the shelter of Your wings.
Selah

5 For You, O God, have heard my vows;
You have given *me* the heritage of those who fear Your name.
6 You will prolong the king's life,
His years as many generations.
7 He shall abide before God forever.
Oh, prepare mercy and truth, *which* may preserve him!

8 So I will sing praise to Your name forever,
That I may daily perform my vows.

60:12 [a]Compare verses 5–12 with 108:6–13 **61:title** [a]Hebrew *neginah*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let those also who hate Him flee before Him. | PSALM 68:1

This verse was the verse the Lord gave me as my Easter verse. It was just before Easter when I was meditating on the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus that I came to this psalm in my devotional time with the Lord. When I saw the words, "Let God arise," I thought of what we were soon to celebrate. That was followed by the words, "Let His enemies be scattered." Isn't that what happened on Easter morning? God arose and His enemies were scattered. In David's mind, undoubtedly he was thinking of a military context; when the ark of God would lead the troops into victory. The Easter application gave me a new love for this psalm.

Psalm 62

A Calm Resolve to Wait for the Salvation of God

To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun.
A Psalm of David.

Truly my soul silently *waits* for God;
From Him *comes* my salvation.
2 He only *is* my rock and my salvation;
He is my defense;
I shall not be greatly moved.

3 How long will you attack a man?
You shall be slain, all of you,
Like a leaning wall and a tottering fence.
4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his high position;
They delight in lies;
They bless with their mouth,
But they curse inwardly.
Selah
5 My soul, wait silently for God alone,
For my expectation *is* from Him.
6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation;
He is my defense;
I shall not be moved.
7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory;
The rock of my strength,
And my refuge, *is* in God.

8 Trust in Him at all times, you people;
Pour out your heart before Him;
God *is* a refuge for us.
Selah
9 Surely men of low degree *are* a vapor,
Men of high degree *are* a lie;
If they are weighed on the scales,
They *are* altogether *lighter* than vapor.
10 Do not trust in oppression,
Nor vainly hope in robbery;
If riches increase,
Do not set *your* heart *on them.*

11 God has spoken once,
Twice I have heard this:
That power *belongs* to God.
12 Also to You, O Lord, *belongs* mercy;
For You render to each one according to his work.

Psalm 63

Joy in the Fellowship of God

A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

O God, You *are* my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.

3 Because Your lovingkindness *is* better than life,
My lips shall praise You.
4 Thus I will bless You while I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.
5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,
And my mouth shall praise *You* with joyful lips.

He who obeys the command "rejoice in the Lord," has a hallelujah in his soul every minute of the day and night.
A.C. DIXON

6 When I remember You on my bed,
I meditate on You in the *night* watches.
7 Because You have been my help,
Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.
8 My soul follows close behind You;
Your right hand upholds me.

9 But those *who* seek my life, to destroy *it,*
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.
10 They shall fall by the sword;
They shall be a portion for jackals.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God;
Everyone who swears by Him shall glory;
But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

Psalm 64

Oppressed by the Wicked but Rejoicing in the LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation;
Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
2 Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked,
From the rebellion of the workers of iniquity,
3 Who sharpen their tongue like a sword,
And bend *their bows to shoot* their arrows—bitter words,
4 That they may shoot in secret at the blameless;
Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear.
5 They encourage themselves *in* an evil matter;
They talk of laying snares secretly;
They say, "Who will see them?"
6 They devise iniquities:
"We have perfected a shrewd scheme."
Both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep.

7 But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow;
Suddenly they shall be wounded.
8 So He will make them stumble over their own tongue;
All who see them shall flee away.
9 All men shall fear,
And shall declare the work of God;
For they shall wisely consider His doing.

10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and trust in Him.
And all the upright in heart shall glory.



SOLVEIG LEITHAUG • Homecoming Artist, Soloist in Norway and U.S.

Our God is the God of salvation; and to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death. | PSALM 68:20

This passage reminded me of a story from northern Norway. Here it is, as told to me:

Andreas Jørgen Andersen was born on October 8, 1837, to Anders Nicolai and Inger Marie. This young family of three lived in a lone homestead on a small island by Dønna in Norway, located about ten kilometers south of the Arctic Circle. Anders Nikolai was a fisherman and maintained a small patch of potatoes and vegetables to sustain his family.

On January 6, 1839, Anders set out by boat with his two friends, the Olsen brothers, to buy provisions from a commercial center a few kilometers distant. On their return, a terrible storm blew up, and their boat was swamped. None of these men were ever found.

Inger Marie, anxious about the fate of her husband, went out in the storm to see if there was any sign of him—perhaps to hoist a lantern by which the men could navigate. Somehow she slipped on the rocks, or was

Psalm 65

Praise to God for His Salvation and Providence

To the Chief Musician.
A Psalm of David. A Song.

Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion;
And to You the vow shall be performed.
2 O You who hear prayer,
To You all flesh will come.
3 Iniquities prevail against me;
As for our transgressions,
You will provide atonement for them.

4 Blessed *is the man* You choose,
And cause to approach *You,*
That he may dwell in Your courts.
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house,
Of Your holy temple.

5 *By* awesome deeds in righteousness You will answer us,
O God of our salvation,
You who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth,
And of the far-off seas;
6 Who established the mountains by His strength,
Being clothed with power;
7 You who still the noise of the seas,
The noise of their waves,
And the tumult of the peoples.
8 They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of Your signs;
You make the outgoings of the morning and evening rejoice.

9 You visit the earth and water it,
You greatly enrich it;
The river of God is full of water;
You provide their grain,
For so You have prepared it.

perhaps blown by the wind, into the sea, and was drowned. Her body was found three months later.

Meanwhile, the storm was said to last through the next day, and on the morning of January 8, the deceaseds' brother, Heironymous Andersen, and his wife could see from Ravnøy where they lived that there was no smoke coming from the chimney of Anders Nicolai's house. Alarmed, Heironymous rowed over to investigate. He found the house deserted except for baby Andreas, fifteen months old, who was wrapped up and had been placed in a cradle. The baby was cold, wet, and starving. He quickly wrapped the baby in dry clothes and brought him home where he and his wife adopted the boy and raised him as their own son.

Despite this tragic start, Andreas grew up to be a robust and prosperous man. Many amusing anecdotes are told to this day which reveal him to have been quick-witted, determined, and thrifty. He married Kristine Marie Bang Pedersdatter Kibsgaard on October 22, 1863. They had nine children, eight of whom survived infancy, and eventually had forty-three grandchildren. Today their descendants number in the hundreds and are located in many countries of the world. I thank God for miraculously sparing baby Andreas' life.

You see, his second youngest child was my grandmother Kristianne. Andreas was my great-grandfather. How thankful I am that "our God is the God of salvation; and to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death."

10 You water its ridges abundantly,
You settle its furrows;
You make it soft with showers,
You bless its growth.

11 You crown the year with Your goodness,
And Your paths drip *with* abundance.
12 They drop *on* the pastures of the wilderness,
And the little hills rejoice on every side.
13 The pastures are clothed with flocks;
The valleys also are covered with grain;
They shout for joy, they also sing.

The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered with grain; they shout for joy, they also sing.
PSALM 65:13

Psalm 66

Praise to God for His Awesome Works

To the Chief Musician. A Song. A Psalm.

Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!
2 Sing out the honor of His name;

Sing out the honor of His name; make His praise glorious.
PSALM 66:2

Make His praise glorious.
3 Say to God,
"How awesome are Your works!
Through the greatness of Your power
Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.
4 All the earth shall worship You
And sing praises to You;
They shall sing praises *to* Your name."
Selah

All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name.
PSALM 66:4

5 Come and see the works of God;
He is awesome *in His* doing toward the sons of men.



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from You. | PSALM 69:5

When I entered high school, I was introduced to the world of home economics. I was an outdoors kid growing up working the crops with my dad. My passion, as I entered high school, was basketball, not cooking, canning, and certainly not sewing. My teacher, Mrs. Trent, probably grasped the immensity of her teaching task when I donned the first fruits of my sewing labor, a skirt that I only had to hem. Undaunted she gave me another assignment, a suit. Never mind that I was all thumbs when I picked up scissors and fabrics (and I still am). Mrs. Trent wanted a suit. She got a suit.

6 He turned the sea into dry *land;*
They went through the river on foot.
There we will rejoice in Him.
7 He rules by His power forever;
His eyes observe the nations;
Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves.
Selah

8 Oh, bless our God, you peoples!
And make the voice of His praise to be heard,
9 Who keeps our soul among the living,
And does not allow our feet to be moved.
10 For You, O God, have tested us;
You have refined us as silver is refined.
11 You brought us into the net;
You laid affliction on our backs.
12 You have caused men to ride over our heads;
We went through fire and through water;
But You brought us out to rich *fulfillment.*

13 I will go into Your house with burnt offerings;
I will pay You my vows,
14 Which my lips have uttered
And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble.
15 I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals,
With the sweet aroma of rams;
I will offer bulls with goats.
Selah

16 Come *and* hear, all you who fear God,
And I will declare what He has done for my soul.
17 I cried to Him with my mouth,
And He was extolled with my tongue.
18 If I regard iniquity in my heart,
The Lord will not hear.
19 *But* certainly God has heard *me;*
He has attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed *be* God,
Who has not turned away my prayer,
Nor His mercy from me!

Actually, the finished product didn't look too bad on the outside. Mrs. Trent turned the suit the wrong side out and coldly inspected the inside. The inside was an outrageous conglomeration of knotted threads, crooked seams, small holes (where I'd ripped out too often), and skipped threads (the dumb bobbin kept messing up). "Young lady," Mrs. Trent said, "this is quite unacceptable." Her voice had that no-nonsense tone. I asked in my meekest voice why the inside was so important, since nobody was going to be looking at it. "After that suit is worn and cleaned several times, the seams will ravel and come apart. Always remember that if the quality of the inside is poor, it won't be long before the outside begins to show the results."

That dear unsung heroine of years ago was right. When I allow resentments, envy, or anger on the *inside,* it isn't long until my *outward* appearance changes, and I become impatient, unforgiving, and unkind. It's only through prayer and meditation that I once again become the person I long to be. All our actions take their cues from the complexion of the heart. Oh, and I did learn to sew, thanks to that home economics class and my mom's helpful instruction.

Reproach has broken my heart,
and I am full of heaviness;
I looked for someone to take pity,
but there was none; and for comforters,
but I found none.

PSALM 69:20

Still today it is the same. Everyone loves a party. Everyone tunes in to the power of positive thinking, but that attention gets very short if the positive thinking is long term and entails some getting worse before it gets better.

Throw a free picnic and you can't keep an accurate count of the multitudes that show up. But drag those same folks to Gethsemane at night with Calvary in view, and you lose their attention, even if on some grand philosophical plane they profess to understand. Esteem seems to be generated by being the bold and the beautiful, the wealthy and the powerful. But lay down the power, become poor, quit being a party animal, and let the tears flow, turn ugly from pain, and you, too, will be able to count your friends on one hand. But oh, what true friends!



Psalm 67

An Invocation and a Doxology

To the Chief Musician. On stringed instruments.[a] A Psalm. A Song.

God be merciful to us and bless us,
And cause His face to shine upon us,
Selah
2 That Your way may be known on earth,
Your salvation among all nations.

3 Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.
4 Oh, let the nations be glad and sing
for joy!
For You shall judge the people
righteously,
And govern the nations on earth.
Selah

5 Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.
6 *Then* the earth shall yield her increase;
God, our own God, shall bless us.
7 God shall bless us,
And all the ends of the earth shall
fear Him.

Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth.

PSALM 67:4

Psalm 68

The Glory of God in His Goodness to Israel

To the Chief Musician.
A Psalm of David. A Song.

Let God arise,
Let His enemies be scattered;
Let those also who hate Him flee
before Him.
2 As smoke is driven away,
So drive *them* away;
As wax melts before the fire,

67:title [a]Hebrew *neginoth*

So let the wicked perish at the
presence of God.
3 But let the righteous be glad;
Let them rejoice before God;
Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly.

Sing to God, sing praises to His name; extol Him who rides on the clouds, by His name YAH, and rejoice before Him.

PSALM 68:4

4 Sing to God, sing praises to His name;
Extol Him who rides on the clouds,[a]
By His name YAH,
And rejoice before Him.

5 A father of the fatherless, a defender
of widows,
Is God in His holy habitation.
6 God sets the solitary in families;
He brings out those who are bound
into prosperity;
But the rebellious dwell in a dry *land.*

7 O God, when You went out before
Your people,
When You marched through the
wilderness,
Selah
8 The earth shook;
The heavens also dropped *rain* at the
presence of God;
Sinai itself *was moved* at the presence
of God, the God of Israel.
9 You, O God, sent a plentiful rain,
Whereby You confirmed Your
inheritance,
When it was weary.
10 Your congregation dwelt in it;
You, O God, provided from Your
goodness for the poor.

11 The Lord gave the word;
Great *was* the company of those who
proclaimed *it:*
12 "Kings of armies flee, they flee,
And she who remains at home divides
the spoil.
13 Though you lie down among the
sheepfolds,
You will be like the wings of a dove
covered with silver,
And her feathers with yellow gold."
14 When the Almighty scattered kings
in it,
It was *white* as snow in Zalmon.

15 A mountain of God *is* the mountain
of Bashan;
A mountain *of many* peaks *is* the
mountain of Bashan.
16 Why do you fume with envy, you
mountains of *many* peaks?
This is the mountain *which* God desires
to dwell in;
Yes, the LORD will dwell *in it* forever.

17 The chariots of God *are* twenty
thousand,
Even thousands of thousands;
The Lord is among them *as in* Sinai,
in the Holy *Place.*
18 You have ascended on high,
You have led captivity captive;
You have received gifts among men,
Even *from* the rebellious,
That the LORD God might dwell *there.*

19 Blessed *be* the Lord,
Who daily loads us *with benefits,*
The God of our salvation!
Selah
20 Our God *is* the God of salvation;
And to GOD the Lord *belong* escapes
from death.

21 But God will wound the head of His
enemies,
The hairy scalp of the one who still
goes on in his trespasses.
22 The Lord said, "I will bring back from
Bashan,
I will bring *them* back from the depths
of the sea,
23 That your foot may crush *them*[a] in blood,
And the tongues of your dogs *may have*
their portion from *your* enemies."

24 They have seen Your procession, O God,
The procession of my God, my King,
into the sanctuary.

68:4 [a]Masoretic Text reads *deserts;* Targum reads *heavens* (compare verse 34 and Isaiah 19:1). **68:23** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *you may dip your foot.*

The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the maidens playing timbrels.
PSALM 68:25

25 The singers went before, the players on
instruments *followed* after;
Among *them were* the maidens playing
timbrels.
26 Bless God in the congregations,
The Lord, from the fountain of Israel.
27 There *is* little Benjamin, their leader,
The princes of Judah *and* their
company,
The princes of Zebulun *and* the
princes of Naphtali.

28 Your God has commanded[a] your
strength;
Strengthen, O God, what You have
done for us.
29 Because of Your temple at Jerusalem,
Kings will bring presents to You.
30 Rebuke the beasts of the reeds,
The herd of bulls with the calves of the
peoples,
Till everyone submits himself with
pieces of silver.
Scatter the peoples *who* delight in war.
31 Envoys will come out of Egypt;
Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her
hands to God.

32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of
the earth;
Oh, sing praises to the Lord,
Selah
33 To Him who rides on the heaven of
heavens, *which were* of old!

68:28 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *Command, O God.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. | PSALM 73:15

Asaph had some fairly harsh thoughts about the Lord in this psalm. Basically, when he saw the wicked prospering, he wondered if it was worth being a child of God. He said, "Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocence." He called himself "foolish and ignorant" for having those thoughts. He considered himself like a beast before the Lord for entertaining such foolishness. It was after reflecting on the nature of his negative thoughts that he was glad that he had not shared them with other believers. Solomon said that there was a time to keep silent and a time to speak. For Asaph, this was a time to keep silent. Why should I air my doubts and frustrations in public? Why should I upset the faith of the weak by exposing them to experiences I have when I am not looking to the Lord? I know this gets thorny when it comes to public confession of sin, but I believe the confession should be only as large as the circle of the sin. Some things are safer to be held in the heart than laid out where Christians might stumble over my confession. Help, Lord!

Indeed, He sends out His voice, a
mighty voice.
34 Ascribe strength to God;
His excellence *is* over Israel,
And His strength *is* in the clouds.
35 O God, *You are* more awesome than
Your holy places.
The God of Israel *is* He who gives
strength and power to *His* people.

Blessed *be* God!

Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; oh, sing praises to the LORD.
PSALM 68:32

Psalm 69

An Urgent Plea for Help in Trouble

To the Chief Musician. Set to
"The Lilies."[a] *A Psalm* of David.

Save me, O God!
For the waters have come up to
my neck.
2 I sink in deep mire,
Where *there is* no standing;
I have come into deep waters,
Where the floods overflow me.
3 I am weary with my crying;
My throat is dry;
My eyes fail while I wait for my God.

4 Those who hate me without a cause
Are more than the hairs of my head;
They are mighty who would destroy me,
Being my enemies wrongfully;
Though I have stolen nothing,
I *still* must restore *it*.

5 O God, You know my foolishness;
And my sins are not hidden from You.
6 Let not those who wait for You, O Lord
GOD of hosts, be ashamed because
of me;
Let not those who seek You be
confounded because of me, O God
of Israel.
7 Because for Your sake I have borne
reproach;
Shame has covered my face.
8 I have become a stranger to my
brothers,
And an alien to my mother's children;
9 Because zeal for Your house has eaten
me up,
And the reproaches of those who
reproach You have fallen on me.
10 When I wept *and chastened* my soul
with fasting,
That became my reproach.
11 I also made sackcloth my garment;
I became a byword to them.
12 Those who sit in the gate speak
against me,
And I *am* the song of the drunkards.

13 But as for me, my prayer *is* to You,
O LORD, *in* the acceptable time;
O God, in the multitude of Your mercy,
Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.
14 Deliver me out of the mire,
And let me not sink;
Let me be delivered from those who
hate me,
And out of the deep waters.
15 Let not the floodwater overflow me,
Nor let the deep swallow me up;
And let not the pit shut its mouth
on me.

16 Hear me, O LORD, for Your
lovingkindness *is* good;
Turn to me according to the multitude
of Your tender mercies.
17 And do not hide Your face from Your
servant,
For I am in trouble;
Hear me speedily.
18 Draw near to my soul, *and* redeem it;
Deliver me because of my enemies.

19 You know my reproach, my shame, and
my dishonor;
My adversaries *are* all before You.
20 Reproach has broken my heart,
And I am full of heaviness;
I looked *for someone* to take pity, but
there was none;
And for comforters, but I found none.
21 They also gave me gall for my food,
And for my thirst they gave me vinegar
to drink.

69:title [a]Hebrew *Shoshannim*

22 Let their table become a snare before them,
And their well-being a trap.
23 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see;
And make their loins shake continually.
24 Pour out Your indignation upon them,
And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them.
25 Let their dwelling place be desolate;
Let no one live in their tents.
26 For they persecute the *ones* You have struck,
And talk of the grief of those You have wounded.
27 Add iniquity to their iniquity,
And let them not come into Your righteousness.
28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living,
And not be written with the righteous.

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.
PSALM 69:30

29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful;
Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high.
30 I will praise the name of God with a song,
And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.
31 *This* also shall please the LORD better than an ox *or* bull,
Which has horns and hooves.
32 The humble shall see *this and* be glad;
And you who seek God, your hearts shall live.
33 For the LORD hears the poor,
And does not despise His prisoners.

34 Let heaven and earth praise Him,
The seas and everything that moves in them.
35 For God will save Zion
And build the cities of Judah,
That they may dwell there and possess it.
36 Also, the descendants of His servants shall inherit it,
And those who love His name shall dwell in it.

Psalm 70

Prayer for Relief from Adversaries

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David. To bring to remembrance.

Make haste, O God, to deliver me!
Make haste to help me, O LORD!

2 Let them be ashamed and confounded
Who seek my life;
Let them be turned back[a] and confused
Who desire my hurt.
3 Let them be turned back because of their shame,
Who say, "Aha, aha!"

4 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
And let those who love Your salvation say continually,
"Let God be magnified!"

5 But I *am* poor and needy;
Make haste to me, O God!
You *are* my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, do not delay.

Psalm 71

God the Rock of Salvation

In You, O LORD, I put my trust;
Let me never be put to shame.
2 Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape;
Incline Your ear to me, and save me.
3 Be my strong refuge,
To which I may resort continually;
You have given the commandment to save me,
For You *are* my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked,

70:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *be appalled* (compare 40:15).

Also with the lute I will praise You—
and Your faithfulness, O my God!
To You I will sing with the harp,
O Holy One of Israel.
PSALM 71:22

Out of the hand of the unrighteous
and cruel man.
5 For You are my hope, O Lord GOD;
You are my trust from my youth.
6 By You I have been upheld from birth;
You are He who took me out of my
mother's womb.
My praise *shall be* continually of You.

7 I have become as a wonder to many,
But You *are* my strong refuge.
8 Let my mouth be filled *with* Your praise
And with Your glory all the day.

9 Do not cast me off in the time of old
age;
Do not forsake me when my strength
fails.
10 For my enemies speak against me;
And those who lie in wait for my life
take counsel together,
11 Saying, "God has forsaken him;
Pursue and take him, for *there is* none
to deliver *him.*"

12 O God, do not be far from me;
O my God, make haste to help me!
13 Let them be confounded *and*
consumed
Who are adversaries of my life;
Let them be covered *with* reproach and
dishonor
Who seek my hurt.

14 But I will hope continually,
And will praise You yet more and more.
15 My mouth shall tell of Your
righteousness
And Your salvation all the day,
For I do not know *their* limits.
16 I will go in the strength of the Lord
GOD;
I will make mention of Your
righteousness, of Yours only.

17 O God, You have taught me from
my youth;
And to this *day* I declare Your
wondrous works.
18 Now also when *I am* old and
grayheaded,
O God, do not forsake me,
Until I declare Your strength to *this*
generation,
Your power to everyone *who* is
to come.

19 Also Your righteousness, O God, *is*
very high,
You who have done great things;
O God, who *is* like You?
20 *You,* who have shown me great and
severe troubles,
Shall revive me again,
And bring me up again from the
depths of the earth.
21 You shall increase my greatness,
And comfort me on every side.

My lips shall greatly rejoice
when I sing to You, and my soul,
which You have redeemed.
PSALM 71:23

22 Also with the lute I will praise You—
And Your faithfulness, O my God!
To You I will sing with the harp,
O Holy One of Israel.
23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I
sing to You,



You hold me by my right hand.
You will guide me with Your counsel,
and afterward receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but You?
And there is none upon earth
that I desire besides You.
My flesh and my heart fail;
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.
PSALM 73:23–26

When we fail at being self-sufficient—and we always fail at being self-sufficient—the Lord restores our souls, redirects our paths and holds us by our right hand. Maybe He holds our right hand so that we won't be tempted to take over and do it ourselves again. He reminds us this way that He is there, that He is strong, and that *His* right hand is free to do all things well. We just need to hold to *His* hand and rejoice in Him. He will do the doing. We no longer need to *perform*. He will perform and perfect all that concerns us. He is, with *His* right hand, taking care of every detail.



And my soul, which You have
redeemed.
24 My tongue also shall talk of Your
righteousness all the day long;
For they are confounded,
For they are brought to shame
Who seek my hurt.

Psalm 72

Glory and Universality of the Messiah's Reign

A Psalm of Solomon.

Give the king Your judgments, O God,
And Your righteousness to the
king's Son.
2 He will judge Your people with
righteousness,
And Your poor with justice.
3 The mountains will bring peace to the
people,
And the little hills, by righteousness.
4 He will bring justice to the poor of the
people;
He will save the children of the needy,
And will break in pieces the oppressor.

5 They shall fear You[a]
As long as the sun and moon endure,
Throughout all generations.
6 He shall come down like rain upon the
grass before mowing,
Like showers *that* water the earth.
7 In His days the righteous shall
flourish,
And abundance of peace,
Until the moon is no more.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea
to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the
earth.
9 Those who dwell in the wilderness will
bow before Him,
And His enemies will lick the dust.
10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles
Will bring presents;
The kings of Sheba and Seba
Will offer gifts.
11 Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him;
All nations shall serve Him.

72:5 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *They shall continue.*

12 For He will deliver the needy when
he cries,
The poor also, and *him* who has no
helper.
13 He will spare the poor and needy,
And will save the souls of the needy.
14 He will redeem their life from
oppression and violence;
And precious shall be their blood in
His sight.

15 And He shall live;
And the gold of Sheba will be given
to Him;
Prayer also will be made for Him
continually,
And daily He shall be praised.

16 There will be an abundance of grain
in the earth,
On the top of the mountains;
Its fruit shall wave like Lebanon;
And *those* of the city shall flourish like
grass of the earth.

17 His name shall endure forever;
His name shall continue as long as
the sun.
And *men* shall be blessed in Him;
All nations shall call Him blessed.

18 Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of
Israel,
Who only does wondrous things!
19 And blessed *be* His glorious name forever!
And let the whole earth be filled *with*
His glory.
Amen and Amen.

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse
are ended.

BOOK THREE: Psalms 73—89

Psalm 73

The Tragedy of the Wicked, and the Blessedness of Trust in God

A Psalm of Asaph.

Truly God *is* good to Israel,
To such as are pure in heart.
2 But as for me, my feet had almost
stumbled;
My steps had nearly slipped.
3 For I *was* envious of the boastful,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 For *there are* no pangs in their death,
But their strength *is* firm.
5 They *are* not in trouble *as other* men,
Nor are they plagued like *other* men.
6 Therefore pride serves as their
necklace;
Violence covers them *like* a garment.
7 Their eyes bulge[a] with abundance;
They have more than heart could wish.
8 They scoff and speak wickedly
concerning oppression;
They speak loftily.
9 They set their mouth against the
heavens,
And their tongue walks through the
earth.

10 Therefore his people return here,
And waters of a full *cup* are drained
by them.
11 And they say, "How does God know?
And is there knowledge in the Most
High?"
12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly,
Who are always at ease;
They increase *in* riches.
13 Surely I have cleansed my heart *in* vain,
And washed my hands in innocence.
14 For all day long I have been plagued,
And chastened every morning.

15 If I had said, "I will speak thus,"
Behold, I would have been untrue to
the generation of Your children.
16 When I thought *how* to understand this,
It *was* too painful for me—
17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God;
Then I understood their end.

18 Surely You set them in slippery places;
You cast them down to destruction.
19 Oh, how they are *brought* to desolation,
as in a moment!
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
20 As a dream when *one* awakes,
So, Lord, when You awake,
You shall despise their image.

73:7 [a]Targum reads *face bulges;* Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *iniquity bulges.*

21 Thus my heart was grieved,
And I was vexed in my mind.
22 I *was* so foolish and ignorant;
I was *like* a beast before You.
23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with You;
You hold *me* by my right hand.
24 You will guide me with Your counsel,
And afterward receive me *to* glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven *but You?*
And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You.
26 My flesh and my heart fail;
But God *is* the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

27 For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish;
You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry.
28 But *it is* good for me to draw near to God;
I have put my trust in the Lord GOD,
That I may declare all Your works.

Psalm 74

A Plea for Relief from Oppressors

A Contemplation[a] of Asaph.

O God, why have You cast *us* off forever?
Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?
2 Remember Your congregation, *which* You have purchased of old,
The tribe of Your inheritance, *which* You have redeemed—
This Mount Zion where You have dwelt.
3 Lift up Your feet to the perpetual desolations.
The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary.
4 Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place;
They set up their banners *for* signs.
5 They seem like men who lift up
Axes among the thick trees.
6 And now they break down its carved work, all at once,
With axes and hammers.
7 They have set fire to Your sanctuary;
They have defiled the dwelling place of Your name to the ground.
8 They said in their hearts,
"Let us destroy them altogether."
They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.

9 We do not see our signs;
There is no longer any prophet;
Nor *is there* any among us who knows how long.
10 O God, how long will the adversary reproach?
Will the enemy blaspheme Your name forever?
11 Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand?
Take it out of Your bosom and destroy *them.*
12 For God *is* my King from of old,
Working salvation in the midst of the earth.
13 You divided the sea by Your strength;
You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters.
14 You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces,
And gave him *as* food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
15 You broke open the fountain and the flood;
You dried up mighty rivers.
16 The day *is* Yours, the night also *is* Yours;
You have prepared the light and the sun.
17 You have set all the borders of the earth;
You have made summer and winter.

18 Remember this, *that* the enemy has reproached, O LORD,
And *that* a foolish people has blasphemed Your name.
19 Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast!
Do not forget the life of Your poor forever.
20 Have respect to the covenant;
For the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty.
21 Oh, do not let the oppressed return ashamed!
Let the poor and needy praise Your name.

74:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

22 Arise, O God, plead Your own cause;
Remember how the foolish man
reproaches You daily.
23 Do not forget the voice of Your enemies;
The tumult of those who rise up
against You increases continually.

Psalm 75

Thanksgiving for God's Righteous Judgment

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy."[a] A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks!
For Your wondrous works declare *that*
Your name is near.

2 "When I choose the proper time,
I will judge uprightly.
3 The earth and all its inhabitants are
dissolved;
I set up its pillars firmly.
Selah

4 "I said to the boastful, 'Do not deal
boastfully,'
And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the
horn.
5 Do not lift up your horn on high;
Do *not* speak with a stiff neck.'"

6 For exaltation *comes* neither from the east
Nor from the west nor from the south.
7 But God *is* the Judge:
He puts down one,
And exalts another.
8 For in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup,
And the wine is red;
It is fully mixed, and He pours it out;
Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of
the earth
Drain *and* drink down.

9 But I will declare forever,
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

But I will declare forever, I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
PSALM 75:9

10 "All the horns of the wicked I will also
cut off,
But the horns of the righteous shall be
exalted."

Psalm 76

The Majesty of God in Judgment

To the Chief Musician. On stringed instruments.[a] A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

In Judah God *is* known;
His name *is* great in Israel.
2 In Salem[a] also is His tabernacle,
And His dwelling place in Zion.
3 There He broke the arrows of the bow,
The shield and sword of battle.
Selah

4 You *are* more glorious and excellent
Than the mountains of prey.
5 The stouthearted were plundered;
They have sunk into their sleep;
And none of the mighty men have
found the use of their hands.
6 At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob,
Both the chariot and horse were cast
into a dead sleep.

7 You, Yourself, *are* to be feared;
And who may stand in Your presence
When once You are angry?
8 You caused judgment to be heard from
heaven;
The earth feared and was still,
9 When God arose to judgment,
To deliver all the oppressed of the
earth.
Selah

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise You;
With the remainder of wrath You shall
gird Yourself.

11 Make vows to the LORD your God, and
pay *them;*
Let all who are around Him bring
presents to Him who ought to be
feared.
12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes;
He is awesome to the kings of the earth.

75:title [a]Hebrew *Al Tashcheth* **76:title** [a]Hebrew *neginoth*
76:2 [a]That is, Jerusalem

Psalm 77

The Consoling Memory of God's Redemptive Works

To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun.
A Psalm of Asaph.

I cried out to God with my voice—
To God with my voice;
And He gave ear to me.
2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;
My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;
My soul refused to be comforted.
3 I remembered God, and was troubled;
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.
Selah

I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, and my spirit makes diligent search.
PSALM 77:6

4 You hold my eyelids *open;*
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
5 I have considered the days of old,
The years of ancient times.
6 I call to remembrance my song in the night;
I meditate within my heart,
And my spirit makes diligent search.

7 Will the Lord cast off forever?
And will He be favorable no more?
8 Has His mercy ceased forever?



LADYE LOVE SMITH • Homecoming Artist, Soloist

You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples. | PSALM 77:14

We're all looking for one some time or another.
I need a *miracle* to help my son, my daughter.
I need a *miracle* to heal this cancer.
I need a *miracle* to pay my bills.
I need a *miracle* to get through to my husband/wife.
I need a *miracle* so that my dad will quit drinking.
I need a *miracle* so that my mom will no longer be depressed.
I need a *miracle* to stop eating, to stop drinking, to stop smoking.
I need a *miracle* of self-esteem, to feel valued.
I need a *miracle* to get through the day.

All these things God *can* do! Jesus demonstrated this miracle power many times. He healed the sick woman who, believing in His power and grace, simply touched his robe (Mark 5:24–26).

He healed the paraplegic in Capernaum whose friends lowered him to Jesus from the rooftop (Mark 2:3–5). He gave the woman at the well dignity and a new life when He told her that by drinking the living water she would never thirst again (John 4:1–42). He healed the sore-covered corpse of Lazarus and brought him back to life and wellness (John 11:43).

Has *His* promise failed forevermore?
9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?
Selah

10 And I said, "This *is* my anguish;
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."
11 I will remember the works of the LORD;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.
12 I will also meditate on all Your work,
And talk of Your deeds.
13 Your way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary;
Who *is* so great a God as *our* God?
14 You *are* the God who does wonders;
You have declared Your strength among the peoples.
15 You have with *Your* arm redeemed Your people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph.
Selah

16 The waters saw You, O God;
The waters saw You, they were afraid;
The depths also trembled.
17 The clouds poured out water;
The skies sent out a sound;
Your arrows also flashed about.
18 The voice of Your thunder *was* in the whirlwind;
The lightnings lit up the world;
The earth trembled and shook.
19 Your way *was* in the sea,
Your path in the great waters,
And Your footsteps were not known.

We often think of a miracle as a resolution of something *we* want or need at that moment: to be healed of a disease, to have our kids change, or to have someone stop a destructive behavior. And when we get that miracle, it's great, it's wonderful, and it's easy to share, to rejoice over with others.

But what if we've prayed and prayed, and wished and hoped, and He doesn't heal us or give us the miracle? Could it be that in His plan, a different sort of miracle than what we are asking is occurring, not as a complete healing as we envision, but as a chance for a new, changed life? Often it means an outcome that is different from what we would have chosen. Some miracles we may not understand or *see* until we get to heaven. Given our limited understanding of how God works His will *in* and *through* our lives, we often experience outcomes which are left unsettled and still searching for the miracle. Try as we may, we are unable to wrench miracles from God's hands. We are forced to really lean on God and trust in His plan.

In the midst of our unquenched thirst for an answer, He blesses with the miracle of perseverance, the ability to hold on, to persist in prayer, or to let go of our wishes. Often it's in our never-ending quest for change that He changes us.

And God gives us the grace to make it *through*.

But the ultimate miracle that He gives us is eternal life, a *new* life. He can take us from a life with no peace and give to us—even in the midst of trouble, heartache, or pain—a life of hope and purpose, saving us and changing our lives both now and for eternity.

What miracle could be ours today?

20 You led Your people like a flock
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Psalm 78

God's Kindness to Rebellious Israel

A Contemplation[a] of Asaph.

Give ear, O my people, *to* my law;
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2 I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old,
3 Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.
4 We will not hide *them* from their children,
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

5 For He established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their children;
6 That the generation to come might know *them,*
The children *who* would be born,
That they may arise and declare *them* to their children,
7 That they may set their hope in God,
And not forget the works of God,
But keep His commandments;
8 And may not be like their fathers,
A stubborn and rebellious generation,
A generation *that* did not set its heart aright,
And whose spirit was not faithful to God.

9 The children of Ephraim, *being* armed *and* carrying bows,
Turned back in the day of battle.
10 They did not keep the covenant of God;
They refused to walk in His law,
11 And forgot His works
And His wonders that He had shown them.

12 Marvelous things He did in the sight of their fathers,
In the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.
13 He divided the sea and caused them to pass through;
And He made the waters stand up like a heap.
14 In the daytime also He led them with the cloud,
And all the night with a light of fire.
15 He split the rocks in the wilderness,
And gave *them* drink in abundance like the depths.
16 He also brought streams out of the rock,
And caused waters to run down like rivers.

17 But they sinned even more against Him
By rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness.
18 And they tested God in their heart
By asking for the food of their fancy.
19 Yes, they spoke against God:
They said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?
20 Behold, He struck the rock,
So that the waters gushed out,
And the streams overflowed.
Can He give bread also?
Can He provide meat for His people?"

21 Therefore the LORD heard *this* and was furious;
So a fire was kindled against Jacob,
And anger also came up against Israel,
22 Because they did not believe in God,
And did not trust in His salvation.
23 Yet He had commanded the clouds above,
And opened the doors of heaven,
24 Had rained down manna on them to eat,
And given them of the bread of heaven.
25 Men ate angels' food;
He sent them food to the full.

26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens;
And by His power He brought in the south wind.
27 He also rained meat on them like the dust,
Feathered fowl like the sand of the seas;

78:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

28 And He let *them* fall in the midst of their camp,
All around their dwellings.
29 So they ate and were well filled,
For He gave them their own desire.
30 They were not deprived of their craving;
But while their food *was* still in their mouths,
31 The wrath of God came against them,
And slew the stoutest of them,
And struck down the choice *men* of Israel.

32 In spite of this they still sinned,
And did not believe in His wondrous works.
33 Therefore their days He consumed in futility,
And their years in fear.

34 When He slew them, then they sought Him;
And they returned and sought earnestly for God.
35 Then they remembered that God *was* their rock,
And the Most High God their Redeemer.
36 Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth,
And they lied to Him with their tongue;
37 For their heart was not steadfast with Him,
Nor were they faithful in His covenant.
38 But He, *being* full of compassion,
forgave *their* iniquity,
And did not destroy *them.*
Yes, many a time He turned His anger away,
And did not stir up all His wrath;
39 For He remembered that they *were but* flesh,
A breath that passes away and does not come again.

40 How often they provoked Him in the wilderness,
And grieved Him in the desert!
41 Yes, again and again they tempted God,
And limited the Holy One of Israel.
42 They did not remember His power:
The day when He redeemed them from the enemy,
43 When He worked His signs in Egypt,
And His wonders in the field of Zoan;
44 Turned their rivers into blood,
And their streams, that they could not drink.
45 He sent swarms of flies among them, which devoured them,
And frogs, which destroyed them.
46 He also gave their crops to the caterpillar,
And their labor to the locust.
47 He destroyed their vines with hail,
And their sycamore trees with frost.
48 He also gave up their cattle to the hail,
And their flocks to fiery lightning.
49 He cast on them the fierceness of His anger,
Wrath, indignation, and trouble,
By sending angels of destruction *among them.*
50 He made a path for His anger;
He did not spare their soul from death,
But gave their life over to the plague,
51 And destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt,
The first of *their* strength in the tents of Ham.
52 But He made His own people go forth like sheep,
And guided them in the wilderness like a flock;
53 And He led them on safely, so that they did not fear;
But the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
54 And He brought them to His holy border,
This mountain *which* His right hand had acquired.



55 He also drove out the nations before them,
Allotted them an inheritance by survey,
And made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.

56 Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God,
And did not keep His testimonies,
57 But turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers;
They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.
58 For they provoked Him to anger with their high places,
And moved Him to jealousy with their carved images.
59 When God heard *this,* He was furious,
And greatly abhorred Israel,
60 So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent He had placed among men,
61 And delivered His strength into captivity,
And His glory into the enemy's hand.
62 He also gave His people over to the sword,
And was furious with His inheritance.
63 The fire consumed their young men,
And their maidens were not given in marriage.
64 Their priests fell by the sword,
And their widows made no lamentation.

65 Then the Lord awoke as *from* sleep,
Like a mighty man who shouts because of wine.
66 And He beat back His enemies;
He put them to a perpetual reproach.

67 Moreover He rejected the tent of Joseph,
And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim,
68 But chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion which He loved.
69 And He built His sanctuary like the heights,
Like the earth which He has established forever.
70 He also chose David His servant,
And took him from the sheepfolds;
71 From following the ewes that had young He brought him,
To shepherd Jacob His people,
And Israel His inheritance.
72 So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart,
And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

O God, behold our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed. | PSALM 84:9

It is difficult to single out one particular psalm and say, "That is my favorite psalm." Having said that, I do believe that Psalm 84 is my favorite psalm. Of the many benedictions in this psalm, one of the greatest is the prayer that God might behold our shield. The Lord Jesus is my shield; He has taken all of the strokes that should have cut me down. I find courage to pray that God will look upon Him when He is dealing with me, rather than looking upon me. Look on Jesus, not me; the face of Your Anointed! He is my Substitute and my defense.

Psalm 79

A Dirge and a Prayer for Israel, Destroyed by Enemies

A Psalm of Asaph.

O God, the nations have come into
Your inheritance;
Your holy temple they have defiled;
They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
2 The dead bodies of Your servants
They have given *as* food for the birds
of the heavens,
The flesh of Your saints to the beasts
of the earth.
3 Their blood they have shed like water
all around Jerusalem,
And *there was* no one to bury *them*.
4 We have become a reproach to our
neighbors,
A scorn and derision to those who are
around us.

5 How long, LORD?
Will You be angry forever?
Will Your jealousy burn like fire?
6 Pour out Your wrath on the nations
that do not know You,
And on the kingdoms that do not call
on Your name.
7 For they have devoured Jacob,
And laid waste his dwelling place.

8 Oh, do not remember former iniquities
against us!
Let Your tender mercies come speedily
to meet us,
For we have been brought very low.
9 Help us, O God of our salvation,
For the glory of Your name;
And deliver us, and provide atonement
for our sins,
For Your name's sake!
10 Why should the nations say,
"Where *is* their God?"
Let there be known among the nations
in our sight
The avenging of the blood of Your
servants *which has been* shed.

11 Let the groaning of the prisoner come
before You;
According to the greatness of Your power
Preserve those who are appointed
to die;
12 And return to our neighbors sevenfold
into their bosom
Their reproach with which they have
reproached You, O Lord.

13 So we, Your people and sheep of
Your pasture,
Will give You thanks forever;
We will show forth Your praise to
all generations.

Psalm 80

Prayer for Israel's Restoration

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies."[a] A Testimony[b] of Asaph. A Psalm.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
You who lead Joseph like a flock;
You who dwell *between* the cherubim,
shine forth!
2 Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and
Manasseh,
Stir up Your strength,
And come *and* save us!

3 Restore us, O God;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

4 O LORD God of hosts,
How long will You be angry
Against the prayer of Your people?
5 You have fed them with the bread
of tears,
And given them tears to drink in
great measure.
6 You have made us a strife to our
neighbors,
And our enemies laugh among
themselves.

7 Restore us, O God of hosts;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

8 You have brought a vine out of Egypt;
You have cast out the nations, and
planted it.
9 You prepared *room* for it,

80:title [a]Hebrew *Shoshannim* [b]Hebrew *Eduth*

And caused it to take deep root,
And it filled the land.
10 The hills were covered with its shadow,
And the mighty cedars with its boughs.
11 She sent out her boughs to the Sea,[a]
And her branches to the River.[b]

12 Why have You broken down her hedges,
So that all who pass by the way pluck
her *fruit?*
13 The boar out of the woods uproots it,
And the wild beast of the field devours it.

14 Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;
Look down from heaven and see,
And visit this vine
15 And the vineyard which Your right
hand has planted,
And the branch *that* You made strong
for Yourself.
16 *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down;
They perish at the rebuke of Your
countenance.
17 Let Your hand be upon the man of
Your right hand,
Upon the son of man *whom* You made
strong for Yourself.
18 Then we will not turn back from You;
Revive us, and we will call upon Your
name.

80:11 [a]That is, the Mediterranean [b]That is, the Euphrates



LYNDA RANDLE • Homecoming Artist, Soloist

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. | PSALM 84:11

This has always been one of my most favorite passages of Scripture. I am particularly fond of it because during our family devotions as a young girl, sitting around our kitchen table, my dad would always say to us that if we walked in obedience before the Lord, the sky would be the limit. He would tell us just how much he loved us and wanted to bless us as his children, but how much more the God of all creation wanted to bless us. My Poppy was right, and if he were alive today, I would say, "Poppy, not even the sky is the limit when we try and walk upright before the Lord!"

If I were to interpret this passage of Scripture today in layman's terms, it would read something like this:

The God of the universe, the Lord of my life, is my bright spot when my way is dark. He warms my heart when it becomes cold and calloused because of deep hurts and wounds. He truly is my covering and shield, shielding me in the midst of troubles and turmoil, keeping my mind and my heart guarded when the world throws things at me with the intent to bring me harm and to destroy my faith.

He is always opening the right doors of opportunities and blessings for me, His child. He's constantly finding ways to celebrate me and to shower me with His infinite love and mercy. When my steps are in sync with His steps, I am able to see what good things are, and I, in turn with a heart of gratitude, look for ways to please Him in all that I do.

19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

Psalm 81

An Appeal for Israel's Repentance

To the Chief Musician. On an instrument of Gath.[a] A Psalm of Asaph.

Sing aloud to God our strength;
Make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob.
2 Raise a song and strike the timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the lute.

3 Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon,
At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.
4 For this *is* a statute for Israel,
A law of the God of Jacob.
5 This He established in Joseph *as* a testimony,
When He went throughout the land of Egypt,
Where I heard a language I did not understand.

Raise a song and strike the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the lute.
PSALM 81:2

6 "I removed his shoulder from the burden;
His hands were freed from the baskets.
7 You called in trouble, and I delivered you;
I answered you in the secret place of thunder;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah.
Selah

8 "Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you!
O Israel, if you will listen to Me!
9 There shall be no foreign god among you;
Nor shall you worship any foreign god.
10 I *am* the LORD your God,
Who brought you out of the land of Egypt;
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.
11 "But My people would not heed My voice,
And Israel would *have* none of Me.
12 So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart,
To walk in their own counsels.

13 "Oh, that My people would listen to Me,
That Israel would walk in My ways!
14 I would soon subdue their enemies,
And turn My hand against their adversaries.
15 The haters of the LORD would pretend submission to Him,
But their fate would endure forever.
16 He would have fed them also with the finest of wheat;
And with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you."

Psalm 82

A Plea for Justice

A Psalm of Asaph.

God stands in the congregation of the mighty;
He judges among the gods.[a]
2 How long will you judge unjustly,
And show partiality to the wicked?
Selah
3 Defend the poor and fatherless;
Do justice to the afflicted and needy.
4 Deliver the poor and needy;
Free *them* from the hand of the wicked.

5 They do not know, nor do they understand;
They walk about in darkness;
All the foundations of the earth are unstable.

6 I said, "You *are* gods,[a]
And all of you *are* children of the Most High.
7 But you shall die like men,
And fall like one of the princes."

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth;
For You shall inherit all nations.

81:title [a]Hebrew *Al Gittith* **82:1** [a]Hebrew *elohim, mighty ones;* that is, the judges **82:6** [a]Hebrew *elohim, mighty ones;* that is, the judges

Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me; for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am holy; You are my God; save Your servant who trusts in You! Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I cry to You all day long.

PSALM 86:1–3

Some hymns are written out of great anguish and despair, and others out of miraculous healing or some divine revelation. But Annie Hawks experienced none of those things when she wrote the words to "I Need Thee Every Hour." Actually, she was just doing laundry. As a wife and mother of three young children, Annie no doubt experienced her share of harried days—attending to scraped knees, hungry tummies, and dirty clothes. But even those moments are significant when we give them to the Lord. It's easy to turn to Him when times are tough or even when something amazing happens, but all the times in between, He's still there, giving us grace to put one foot in front of the other, strengthening us with His ever-present love, treasuring the life that we've entrusted to Him. And every now and then, like Annie Hawks, we become aware of it: "Suddenly, I became so filled with the sense of nearness to the Master that, wondering how one could live without Him, either in joy or pain, these words, 'I need Thee every hour,' were ushered into my mind, the thought at once taking full possession of me." After she had penned the verses, she sent them to her pastor, Robert Lowry, who supplied the refrain and the music.

Mrs. Hawks may not have known at the time that the Lord was using those moments to lay a foundation of trust in His goodness, strengthening her for rockier roads ahead. But years later, when she experienced the death of her husband, she explained, "I did not understand at first why this hymn had touched the great throbbing heart of humanity. It was not until long after, when the shadow fell over my way, the shadow of a great loss, that I understand something of the comforting power in the words which I had been permitted to give out to others in my hour of sweet serenity and peace."

I Need Thee Every Hour

Annie S. Hawks and Robert Lowry | 1872

I need Thee every hour, most gracious Lord;
No tender voice like Thine can peace afford.

Refrain:
I need Thee, oh, I need Thee;
Every hour I need Thee;
Oh, bless me now, my Savior,
I come to Thee.

I need Thee every hour, stay Thou nearby;
Temptations lose their pow'r when Thou art nigh.

Refrain

I need Thee every hour, in joy or pain;
Come quickly and abide, or life is vain.

Refrain

I need Thee every hour; teach me Thy will;
And Thy rich promises in me fulfill.

Refrain

I need Thee every hour, most Holy One;
Oh, make me Thine indeed, Thou blessed Son.

Psalm 83

Prayer to Frustrate Conspiracy Against Israel

A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.

Do not keep silent, O God!
Do not hold Your peace,
And do not be still, O God!
2 For behold, Your enemies make a tumult;
And those who hate You have lifted up their head.
3 They have taken crafty counsel against Your people,
And consulted together against Your sheltered ones.
4 They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from *being* a nation,
That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."

5 For they have consulted together with one consent;
They form a confederacy against You:
6 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites;
Moab and the Hagrites;
7 Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek;
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;
8 Assyria also has joined with them;
They have helped the children of Lot.
Selah

9 Deal with them as *with* Midian,
As *with* Sisera,
As *with* Jabin at the Brook Kishon,
10 Who perished at En Dor,
Who became *as* refuse on the earth.
11 Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb,
Yes, all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,
12 Who said, "Let us take for ourselves
The pastures of God for a possession."

13 O my God, make them like the whirling dust,
Like the chaff before the wind!
14 As the fire burns the woods,
And as the flame sets the mountains on fire,
15 So pursue them with Your tempest,
And frighten them with Your storm.
16 Fill their faces with shame,
That they may seek Your name,
O LORD.
17 Let them be confounded and dismayed forever;
Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,
18 That they may know that You, whose name alone *is* the LORD,
Are the Most High over all the earth.

The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance.
C.S. LEWIS

Psalm 84

The Blessedness of Dwelling in the House of God

To the Chief Musician. On an instrument of Gath.[a] A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

How lovely *is* Your tabernacle,
O LORD of hosts!
2 My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

3 Even the sparrow has found a home,
And the swallow a nest for herself,
Where she may lay her young—
Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,
My King and my God.
4 Blessed *are* those who dwell in Your house;
They will still be praising You.
Selah

5 Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in You,
Whose heart *is* set on pilgrimage.
6 *As they* pass through the Valley of Baca,
They make it a spring;
The rain also covers it with pools.
7 They go from strength to strength;
Each one appears before God in Zion.[a]

84:title [a]Hebrew *Al Gittith* **84:7** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *The God of gods shall be seen.*

8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
Give ear, O God of Jacob!
Selah
9 O God, behold our shield,
And look upon the face of Your anointed.

10 For a day in Your courts *is* better than a thousand.
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11 For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield;
The LORD will give grace and glory;
No good *thing* will He withhold
From those who walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts,
Blessed *is* the man who trusts in You!

Psalm 85

Prayer that the LORD Will Restore Favor to the Land

To the Chief Musician.
A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

LORD, You have been favorable to Your land;
You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.
2 You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people;
You have covered all their sin.
Selah
3 You have taken away all Your wrath;
You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.

4 Restore us, O God of our salvation,
And cause Your anger toward us to cease.
5 Will You be angry with us forever?
Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?
6 Will You not revive us again,
That Your people may rejoice in You?
7 Show us Your mercy, LORD,
And grant us Your salvation.

8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak,
For He will speak peace
To His people and to His saints;
But let them not turn back to folly.

9 Surely His salvation *is* near to those who fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed.
11 Truth shall spring out of the earth,
And righteousness shall look down from heaven.
12 Yes, the LORD will give *what is* good;
And our land will yield its increase.
13 Righteousness will go before Him,
And shall make His footsteps *our* pathway.

Psalm 86

Prayer for Mercy, with Meditation on the Excellencies of the LORD

A Prayer of David.

Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me;
For I *am* poor and needy.
2 Preserve my life, for I *am* holy;
You are my God;
Save Your servant who trusts in You!
3 Be merciful to me, O Lord,
For I cry to You all day long.
4 Rejoice the soul of Your servant,
For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
5 For You, Lord, *are* good, and ready to forgive,
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

6 Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
And attend to the voice of my supplications.
7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,
For You will answer me.

8 Among the gods *there is* none like You, O Lord;
Nor *are there any works* like Your works.
9 All nations whom You have made
Shall come and worship before You, O Lord,
And shall glorify Your name.
10 For You *are* great, and do wondrous things;
You alone *are* God.

HYMNS

His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God!

PSALM 87:1–3

John Newton's most well-known song is "Amazing Grace," but he actually wrote hundreds of hymns and gospel songs—in fact, a whole hymnal's worth. After Newton's dramatic conversion (see p. 464), he eventually became a pastor in Olney, Buckinghamshire, in rural England. Ministering to mostly poor, uneducated believers, Newton realized that the high church ceremonies were not helping his congregants draw closer to the Lord. So Newton recruited his friend, poet William Cowper, and the two began writing songs for the church to sing, eventually compiling them into *The Olney Hymns*. In the preface of the hymnal, Newton explained that their goal was to compose songs "designed for public worship, and for the use of plain people" and to support "the faith and comfort of sincere Christians." In all, there were 348 songs in the original publication, many of which are still sung by Christians today.

Newton and Cowper divided *The Olney Hymns* into three sections: "Book I—On Select Texts of Scripture," "Book II—On Occasional Subjects," and "Book III—On the Progress and Changes of the Spiritual Life." They further divided each book by assigning songs to each book of the Bible, thereby teaching parishioners not just the words of Scripture, but also the order of it. One of the most well-known songs in *The Olney Hymns* is "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken," which is in Book I and is based on several passages of Scripture. In fact, Newton annotated more Scripture sources for this hymn than any other in the book.

The first two lines of the hymn, "Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God," come from Psalm 87:3. For the next two, "He whose word cannot be broken, formed thee for thee own abode," Newton referenced Psalm 132:14. The next line, "On the Rock of Ages founded," comes directly from Jesus' mouth when He renamed Simon "Peter," saying, "On this rock I will build My church" (Matt. 16:18). "With salvation's walls surrounded" originates in Isaiah 26:1; and for "See! the streams of living waters, spring from eternal love," Newton notated Psalm 46:4. The imagery of "Round each habitation hovering, see the cloud and fire appear!" draws its inspiration from Isaiah 4:5, 6. The inspired greeting from John to the seven churches in Revelation, "To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1:5, 6), serves as the inspiration for the line in verse four, "Jesus, whom their souls rely on, makes them kings and priests to God."

"Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" is a wonderful song of praise to the Lord and encouragement to believers, but it's also a great lesson in worship. With this song, and *The Olney Hymns* on the whole, Newton proved that when praising God, the best place to start is in the Holy Scriptures.

Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken

John Newton | 1779

1. Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He whose word cannot be broken
Formed thee for his own abode;
On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

2. See! the streams of living waters,
Spring from eternal love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters
And all fear of want remove.
Who can faint, when such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace which, like the Lord, the Giver,
Never fails from age to age.

3. Round each habitation hovering,
See the cloud and fire appear!
For a glory and a covering,
Showing that the Lord is near.
Thus they march, their pillar leading,
Light by night, and shade by day;
Daily on the manna feeding
Which he gives them when they pray.

4. Blest inhabitants of Zion,
Washed in the Redeemer's blood!
Jesus, whom their souls rely on,
Makes them kings and priests to God.
'Tis his love his people raises
Over self to reign as kings:
And as priests, his solemn praises
Each for a thank-offering brings.

5. Savior, if of Zion's city,
I through grace a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in thy Name.
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know.

In Your name they rejoice all day long,
and in Your righteousness
they are exalted.
PSALM 89:16

Though now you do not see Him,
yet believing, you rejoice with
joy inexpressible
and full of glory.
1 PETER 1:8

I am strong and righteous. I am free from sentence, free from condemnation. I am justified. I am dancing with joy because my heart is upright. Because I embrace Jesus, He takes my record book and I take His! He took my history to the Cross; I take His history to heaven. So—free as a child—I dance in the sunshine. No light can be so bright that it will expose anything in me to make me ashamed or dampen my spirit. Believing, I am overwhelmed by joy. Is this glory?



11 Teach me Your way, O LORD;
I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name.
12 I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
And I will glorify Your name forevermore.
13 For great *is* Your mercy toward me,
And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

14 O God, the proud have risen against me,
And a mob of violent *men* have sought my life,
And have not set You before them.
15 But You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and gracious,
Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

16 Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me!
Give Your strength to Your servant,
And save the son of Your maidservant.
17 Show me a sign for good,
That those who hate me may see *it* and be ashamed,
Because You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

Psalm 87

The Glories of the City of God

A Psalm of the sons of Korah. A Song.

His foundation *is* in the holy mountains.
2 The LORD loves the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
3 Glorious things are spoken of you,
O city of God!
Selah

4 "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me;
Behold, O Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia:
'This *one* was born there.'"

5 And of Zion it will be said,
"This *one* and that *one* were born in her;
And the Most High Himself shall establish her."

6 The LORD will record,
When He registers the peoples:
"This *one* was born there."
Selah

7 Both the singers and the players on instruments *say,*
"All my springs *are* in you."

Psalm 88

A Prayer for Help in Despondency

A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. To the Chief Musician. Set to "Mahalath Leannoth." A Contemplation[a] of Heman the Ezrahite.

O LORD, God of my salvation,
I have cried out day and night before You.
2 Let my prayer come before You;
Incline Your ear to my cry.

3 For my soul is full of troubles,
And my life draws near to the grave.
4 I am counted with those who go down to the pit;
I am like a man *who has* no strength,
5 Adrift among the dead,
Like the slain who lie in the grave,
Whom You remember no more,
And who are cut off from Your hand.

6 You have laid me in the lowest pit,
In darkness, in the depths.
7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
And You have afflicted *me* with all Your waves.
Selah
8 You have put away my acquaintances far from me;
You have made me an abomination to them;
I am shut up, and I cannot get out;
9 My eye wastes away because of affliction.

LORD, I have called daily upon You;
I have stretched out my hands to You.
10 Will You work wonders for the dead?
Shall the dead arise *and* praise You?
Selah
11 Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave?
Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction?
12 Shall Your wonders be known in the dark?
And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

13 But to You I have cried out, O LORD,
And in the morning my prayer comes before You.
14 LORD, why do You cast off my soul?
Why do You hide Your face from me?
15 I *have been* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth;
I suffer Your terrors;
I am distraught.
16 Your fierce wrath has gone over me;
Your terrors have cut me off.
17 They came around me all day long like water;
They engulfed me altogether.
18 Loved one and friend You have put far from me,
And my acquaintances into darkness.

Psalm 89

Remembering the Covenant with David, and Sorrow for Lost Blessings

A Contemplation[a] of Ethan the Ezrahite.

I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever;
With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.
2 For I have said, "Mercy shall be built up forever;
Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens."

3 "I have made a covenant with My chosen,
I have sworn to My servant David:
4 'Your seed I will establish forever,
And build up your throne to all generations.'"
Selah

5 And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD;
Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints.

88:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil* **89:title** [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever You had formed the earth and the world,
even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

PSALM 90:1, 2

The Psalms have always been one of the most beloved books to believers, expressing every feeling imaginable—from abounding joy to deep, deep sorrow, from doubt and fear to rock-solid faith and assurance—to the loving God of the universe. A study in the Psalms will reveal the history of God's people, the heart of the psalmists—mostly notably King David—and even more so, the character of the living God. It was with this knowledge in mind that Isaac Watts set out to write *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament,* a compilation of paraphrased versions of nearly every psalm. Watts believed that even though David was no doubt a vessel of God in composing the Psalms, he didn't have the full knowledge of the gospel, that which could only be known by someone who knew Jesus, who had experienced the truth of the New Testament. So he decided to rewrite them from this Christian perspective.

"O God, Our Help in Ages Past" is Watts's paraphrase of Psalm 90. He had originally written nine stanzas, but these days, we only sing verses one, two, three, five, and nine. It has been a favorite in England, having been played on the BBC at the declaration of World War II and at Winston Churchill's funeral. But this song is not nearly the most popular of *The Psalms of David*. "Joy to the World," based on Psalm 98, is the most widely sung of all of Watts's hymns. The Psalms, the songbook of Israel, were all intended to be sung, and they remain a great inspiration for songwriters today.

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Isaac Watts | 1719

1. *Our God, our* help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

2. *Under the shadow* of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.

3. *Before the hills* in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

4. *A thousand ages* in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

5. *Our God, our* help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

6 For who in the heavens can be
compared to the LORD?
Who among the sons of the mighty can
be likened to the LORD?
7 God is greatly to be feared in the
assembly of the saints,
And to be held in reverence by all *those*
around Him.
8 O LORD God of hosts,
Who *is* mighty like You, O LORD?
Your faithfulness also surrounds You.
9 You rule the raging of the sea;
When its waves rise, You still them.
10 You have broken Rahab in pieces, as
one who is slain;
You have scattered Your enemies with
Your mighty arm.

11 The heavens *are* Yours, the earth also *is*
Yours;
The world and all its fullness, You have
founded them.
12 The north and the south, You have
created them;
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Your
name.
13 You have a mighty arm;
Strong is Your hand, *and* high is Your
right hand.
14 Righteousness and justice *are* the
foundation of Your throne;
Mercy and truth go before Your face.
15 Blessed *are* the people who know the
joyful sound!
They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your
countenance.
16 In Your name they rejoice all day long,
And in Your righteousness they are
exalted.
17 For You *are* the glory of their
strength,
And in Your favor our horn is exalted.
18 For our shield *belongs* to the LORD,
And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

19 Then You spoke in a vision to Your
holy one,[a]
And said: "I have given help to *one who*
is mighty;
I have exalted one chosen from the
people.
20 I have found My servant David;
With My holy oil I have anointed him,
21 With whom My hand shall be
established;
Also My arm shall strengthen him.
22 The enemy shall not outwit him,
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
23 I will beat down his foes before his face,
And plague those who hate him.

24 "But My faithfulness and My mercy *shall*
be with him,
And in My name his horn shall be
exalted.
25 Also I will set his hand over the sea,
And his right hand over the rivers.
26 He shall cry to Me, 'You *are* my Father,
My God, and the rock of my salvation.'
27 Also I will make him *My* firstborn,
The highest of the kings of the earth.
28 My mercy I will keep for him forever,
And My covenant shall stand firm
with him.
29 His seed also I will make *to endure* forever,
And his throne as the days of heaven.

30 "If his sons forsake My law
And do not walk in My judgments,
31 If they break My statutes
And do not keep My commandments,
32 Then I will punish their transgression
with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes.
33 Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will
not utterly take from him,
Nor allow My faithfulness to fail.

89:19 [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts; Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *holy ones*.



34 My covenant I will not break,
Nor alter the word that has gone out
of My lips.
35 Once I have sworn by My holiness;
I will not lie to David:
36 His seed shall endure forever,
And his throne as the sun before Me;
37 It shall be established forever like
the moon,
Even *like* the faithful witness in the sky."
Selah
38 But You have cast off and abhorred,
You have been furious with Your
anointed.
39 You have renounced the covenant of
Your servant;
You have profaned his crown *by casting
it* to the ground.
40 You have broken down all his hedges;
You have brought his strongholds to
ruin.
41 All who pass by the way plunder him;
He is a reproach to his neighbors.
42 You have exalted the right hand of his
adversaries;
You have made all his enemies rejoice.
43 You have also turned back the edge of
his sword,
And have not sustained him in the battle.
44 You have made his glory cease,
And cast his throne down to the ground.
45 The days of his youth You have
shortened;
You have covered him with shame.
Selah

46 How long, LORD?
Will You hide Yourself forever?
Will Your wrath burn like fire?
47 Remember how short my time is;
For what futility have You created all
the children of men?
48 What man can live and not see death?
Can he deliver his life from the power
of the grave?
Selah

49 Lord, where *are* Your former
lovingkindnesses,
Which You swore to David in Your truth?
50 Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your
servants—
How I bear in my bosom *the reproach of*
all the many peoples,
51 With which Your enemies have
reproached, O LORD,
With which they have reproached the
footsteps of Your anointed.

52 Blessed *be* the LORD forevermore!
Amen and Amen.

BOOK FOUR: Psalms 90—106

Psalm 90

The Eternity of God, and Man's Frailty

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place[a]
in all generations.
2 Before the mountains were brought
forth,
Or ever You had formed the earth and
the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting,
You *are* God.

3 You turn man to destruction,
And say, "Return, O children of men."
4 For a thousand years in Your sight
Are like yesterday when it is past,
And *like* a watch in the night.
5 You carry them away *like* a flood;
They are like a sleep.
In the morning they are like grass
which grows up:
6 In the morning it flourishes and
grows up;
In the evening it is cut down and
withers.

7 For we have been consumed by
Your anger,
And by Your wrath we are terrified.
8 You have set our iniquities before You,
Our secret *sins* in the light of Your
countenance.
9 For all our days have passed away in
Your wrath;
We finish our years like a sigh.
10 The days of our lives *are* seventy years;
And if by reason of strength *they are*
eighty years,
Yet their boast *is* only labor and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

90:1 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *refuge.*

11 Who knows the power of Your anger?
For as the fear of You, *so is* Your wrath.
12 So teach *us* to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD!
How long?
And have compassion on Your servants.
14 Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy,
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days!
15 Make us glad according to the days *in which* You have afflicted us,
The years *in which* we have seen evil.
16 Let Your work appear to Your servants,
And Your glory to their children.
17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us,
And establish the work of our hands for us;
Yes, establish the work of our hands.

Psalm 91

Safety of Abiding in the Presence of God

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say of the LORD, "*He is* my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."

3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler[a]
And from the perilous pestilence.
4 He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler.
5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow *that* flies by day,
6 *Nor* of the pestilence *that* walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction *that* lays waste at noonday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side,
And ten thousand at your right hand;
But it shall not come near you.
8 Only with your eyes shall you look,
And see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the LORD, *who is* my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,
10 No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
11 For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.
12 In *their* hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.

14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him on high, because he has known My name.
15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I *will be* with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.
16 With long life I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation."

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
and to sing praises to Your name,
O Most High.
PSALM 92:1

Psalm 92

Praise to the LORD for His Love and Faithfulness

A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath day.

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
2 To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning,
And Your faithfulness every night,
3 On an instrument of ten strings,
On the lute,

91:3 [a]That is, one who catches birds in a trap or snare

And on the harp,
With harmonious sound.
4 For You, LORD, have made me glad
through Your work;
I will triumph in the works of Your hands.

5 O LORD, how great are Your works!
Your thoughts are very deep.
6 A senseless man does not know,
Nor does a fool understand this.
7 When the wicked spring up like grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity
flourish,
It is that they may be destroyed forever.

8 But You, LORD, *are* on high forevermore.
9 For behold, Your enemies, O LORD,
For behold, Your enemies shall perish;
All the workers of iniquity shall be
scattered.

10 But my horn You have exalted like a
wild ox;
I have been anointed with fresh oil.
11 My eye also has seen *my desire* on my
enemies;
My ears hear *my desire* on the wicked
Who rise up against me.

12 The righteous shall flourish like a
palm tree,
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
13 Those who are planted in the house of
the LORD
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be fresh and flourishing,
15 To declare that the LORD is upright;
He is my rock, and *there is* no
unrighteousness in Him.

Psalm 93

The Eternal Reign of the LORD

The LORD reigns, He is clothed with
majesty;
The LORD is clothed,
He has girded Himself with strength.
Surely the world is established, so that
it cannot be moved.
2 Your throne *is* established from of old;
You *are* from everlasting.
3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.
4 The LORD on high *is* mightier
Than the noise of many waters,
Than the mighty waves of the sea.

5 Your testimonies are very sure;
Holiness adorns Your house,
O LORD, forever.

Psalm 94

God the Refuge of the Righteous

O LORD God, to whom vengeance
belongs—
O God, to whom vengeance belongs,
shine forth!
2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth;
Render punishment to the proud.
3 LORD, how long will the wicked,
How long will the wicked triumph?

4 They utter speech, *and* speak insolent
things;
All the workers of iniquity boast in
themselves.
5 They break in pieces Your people,
O LORD,
And afflict Your heritage.
6 They slay the widow and the stranger,
And murder the fatherless.
7 Yet they say, "The LORD does not see,
Nor does the God of Jacob understand."

8 Understand, you senseless among
the people;
And *you* fools, when will you be wise?
9 He who planted the ear, shall He
not hear?
He who formed the eye, shall He not see?
10 He who instructs the nations, shall He
not correct,
He who teaches man knowledge?
11 The LORD knows the thoughts of man,
That they *are* futile.

12 Blessed *is* the man whom You instruct,
O LORD,
And teach out of Your law,
13 That You may give him rest from the
days of adversity,
Until the pit is dug for the wicked.

14 For the LORD will not cast off His people,
Nor will He forsake His inheritance.
15 But judgment will return to
righteousness,
And all the upright in heart will follow it.

16 Who will rise up for me against the
evildoers?
Who will stand up for me against the
workers of iniquity?
17 Unless the LORD *had been* my help,
My soul would soon have settled in
silence.
18 If I say, "My foot slips,"
Your mercy, O LORD, will hold me up.
19 In the multitude of my anxieties
within me,
Your comforts delight my soul.

20 Shall the throne of iniquity, which
devises evil by law,
Have fellowship with You?
21 They gather together against the life
of the righteous,
And condemn innocent blood.
22 But the LORD has been my defense,
And my God the rock of my refuge.
23 He has brought on them their own
iniquity,
And shall cut them off in their own
wickedness;
The LORD our God shall cut them off.

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD!
Let us shout joyfully to the
Rock of our salvation.
PSALM 95:1

Psalm 95

A Call to Worship and Obedience

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD!
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of
our salvation.
2 Let us come before His presence with
thanksgiving;
Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.
3 For the LORD *is* the great God,
And the great King above all gods.
4 In His hand *are* the deep places of
the earth;

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
PSALM 96:1

The heights of the hills *are* His also.
5 The sea *is* His, for He made it;
And His hands formed the dry *land*.

6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
7 For He *is* our God,
And we *are* the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.

Today, if you will hear His voice:
8 "Do not harden your hearts, as in the
rebellion,[a]
As *in* the day of trial[b] in the wilderness,
9 When your fathers tested Me;
They tried Me, though they saw My work.
10 For forty years I was grieved with *that*
generation,
And said, 'It *is* a people who go astray
in their hearts,
And they do not know My ways.'
11 So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest.'"

Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
proclaim the good news of His
salvation from day to day.
PSALM 96:2

Psalm 96

A Song of Praise to God Coming in Judgment

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
2 Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His
salvation from day to day.
3 Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

4 For the LORD *is* great and greatly to
be praised;
He *is* to be feared above all gods.

95:8 [a]Or *Meribah* [b]Or *Massah*

5 For all the gods of the peoples *are* idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.
6 Honor and majesty *are* before Him;
Strength and beauty *are* in His sanctuary.

7 Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
Give to the LORD glory and strength.
8 Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name;
Bring an offering, and come into His courts.
9 Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!
Tremble before Him, all the earth.

10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns;
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be moved;
He shall judge the peoples righteously."

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
12 Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* in it.
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice
13 before the LORD.
For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with His truth.

Psalm 97

A Song of Praise to the Sovereign LORD

The LORD reigns;
Let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad!

2 Clouds and darkness surround Him;
Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.
3 A fire goes before Him,
And burns up His enemies round about.
4 His lightnings light the world;
The earth sees and trembles.
5 The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
6 The heavens declare His righteousness,
And all the peoples see His glory.

7 Let all be put to shame who serve carved images,
Who boast of idols.
Worship Him, all *you* gods.
8 Zion hears and is glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of Your judgments, O LORD.
9 For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth;
You are exalted far above all gods.

10 You who love the LORD, hate evil!
He preserves the souls of His saints;
He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.
11 Light is sown for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart.
12 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous,
And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.[a]

Shout joyfully to the LORD,
all the earth; break forth in song,
rejoice, and sing praises.
PSALM 98:4

Psalm 98

A Song of Praise to the LORD for His Salvation and Judgment

A Psalm.

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has done marvelous things;
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.
2 The LORD has made known His salvation;
His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.
3 He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

4 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.
5 Sing to the LORD with the harp,
With the harp and the sound of a psalm,

97:12 [a]Or *His holiness*

6 With trumpets and the sound of
a horn;
Shout joyfully before the LORD,
the King.

7 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell in it;
8 Let the rivers clap *their* hands;
Let the hills be joyful together
9 before the LORD.
For He is coming to judge the earth.
With righteousness He shall judge
the world,
And the peoples with equity.

Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of a psalm.
PSALM 98:5

Psalm 99

Praise to the LORD for His Holiness

The LORD reigns;
Let the peoples tremble!
He dwells *between* the cherubim;
Let the earth be moved!
2 The LORD *is* great in Zion,
And He *is* high above all the peoples.
3 Let them praise Your great and
awesome name—
He *is* holy.

4 The King's strength also loves justice;
You have established equity;
You have executed justice and
righteousness in Jacob.
5 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His footstool—
He *is* holy.

6 Moses and Aaron were among His
priests,
And Samuel was among those who
called upon His name;
They called upon the LORD, and He
answered them.
7 He spoke to them in the cloudy
pillar;
They kept His testimonies and the
ordinance He gave them.
8 You answered them, O LORD our God;
You were to them God-Who-Forgives,
Though You took vengeance on their
deeds.
9 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His holy hill;
For the LORD our God *is* holy.

Psalm 100

A Song of Praise for the LORD's Faithfulness to His People

A Psalm of Thanksgiving.

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all
you lands!
2 Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before His presence with singing.
3 Know that the LORD, He *is* God;
It is He *who* has made us, and not we
ourselves;[a]
We are His people and the sheep of His
pasture.

4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name.
5 For the LORD *is* good;
His mercy *is* everlasting,
And His truth *endures* to all generations.

Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing.
PSALM 100:2

Psalm 101

Promised Faithfulness to the LORD

A Psalm of David.

I will sing of mercy and justice;
To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.

2 I will behave wisely in a perfect way.
Oh, when will You come to me?
I will walk within my house with a
perfect heart.

3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes;
I hate the work of those who fall away;

100:3 [a]Following Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Qere, many Hebrew manuscripts, and Targum read *we are His.*

It shall not cling to me.
4 A perverse heart shall depart from me;
I will not know wickedness.

5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor,
Him I will destroy;
The one who has a haughty look and
a proud heart,
Him I will not endure.

6 My eyes *shall be* on the faithful of
the land,
That they may dwell with me;
He who walks in a perfect way,
He shall serve me.
7 He who works deceit shall not dwell
within my house;
He who tells lies shall not continue in
my presence.
8 Early I will destroy all the wicked of
the land,
That I may cut off all the evildoers
from the city of the LORD.

Psalm 102

The LORD's Eternal Love

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the LORD.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And let my cry come to You.
2 Do not hide Your face from me in the
day of my trouble;
Incline Your ear to me;
In the day that I call, answer me speedily.

3 For my days are consumed like smoke,
And my bones are burned like a hearth.
4 My heart is stricken and withered like
grass,
So that I forget to eat my bread.
5 Because of the sound of my groaning
My bones cling to my skin.
6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness;
I am like an owl of the desert.
7 I lie awake,
And am like a sparrow alone on the
housetop.

8 My enemies reproach me all day long;
Those who deride me swear an oath
against me.
9 For I have eaten ashes like bread,
And mingled my drink with weeping,
10 Because of Your indignation and Your
wrath;
For You have lifted me up and cast me
away.
11 My days *are* like a shadow that lengthens,
And I wither away like grass.

12 But You, O LORD, shall endure forever,
And the remembrance of Your name to
all generations.
13 You will arise *and* have mercy on Zion;
For the time to favor her,
Yes, the set time, has come.
14 For Your servants take pleasure in her
stones,
And show favor to her dust.
15 So the nations shall fear the name of
the LORD,
And all the kings of the earth Your glory.
16 For the LORD shall build up Zion;
He shall appear in His glory.
17 He shall regard the prayer of the
destitute,
And shall not despise their prayer.

18 This will be written for the generation
to come,
That a people yet to be created may
praise the LORD.
19 For He looked down from the height of
His sanctuary;
From heaven the LORD viewed the earth,
20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner,
To release those appointed to death,
21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion,
And His praise in Jerusalem,
22 When the peoples are gathered
together,
And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.



He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor punished us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is His mercy toward those who fear
Him; as far as the east is from the west,
so far has He removed our transgressions
from us. As a father pities his children,
so the LORD *pities those who fear Him.*
For He knows our frame; He remembers
that we are dust.

PSALM 103:10–14

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

REVELATION 3:19

Did you ever handle a mud dauber's nest? It, like us, is made from the breath and saliva of its maker mixed with a little dusty earth. If a strong hand holds one, it must be tender or it will crumble. Even when the hand is trying to be careful.

God holds just such a fragile creation in His mighty hand. He knows that we are dust because He made us Himself from the dust of the earth and His own breath. When things happen to us in the natural course of life on this earth, we feel as if we are about to crumble and sometimes ignorantly ask, "Is God doing this to me? Why is He being so hard on me? What have I done to deserve this?" Don't fool yourself; if God was being hard on you, His mighty hand would make a puff of smoke out of you. No, His hand is holding you, tenderly, surrounding you so that the pulverizing forces of life won't destroy you. Do you deserve His mercy? Or life's storms? That is beside the point. He loves you, that's all. He feels deeply sorry that you hurt so. He has removed your transgressions from you and holds you in His hands. He remembers that you are dust.



23 He weakened my strength in the way;
He shortened my days.
24 I said, "O my God,
Do not take me away in the midst of my days;
Your years *are* throughout all generations.
25 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens *are* the work of Your hands.
26 They will perish, but You will endure;
Yes, they will all grow old like a garment;
Like a cloak You will change them,
And they will be changed.
27 But You *are* the same,
And Your years will have no end.
28 The children of Your servants will continue,
And their descendants will be established before You."

Psalm 103

Praise for the LORD's Mercies

A Psalm of David.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
3 Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,
4 Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
5 Who satisfies your mouth with good *things,*
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The LORD executes righteousness
And justice for all who are oppressed.
7 He made known His ways to Moses,
His acts to the children of Israel.
8 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.
9 He will not always strive *with us,*
Nor will He keep *His anger* forever.
10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,

Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
13 As a father pities *his* children,
So the LORD pities those who fear Him.
14 For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we *are* dust.

15 *As for* man, his days *are* like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
And its place remembers it no more.[a]
17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting
On those who fear Him,
And His righteousness to children's children,
18 To such as keep His covenant,
And to those who remember His commandments to do them.

19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven,
And His kingdom rules over all.

20 Bless the LORD, you His angels,
Who excel in strength, who do His word,
Heeding the voice of His word.
21 Bless the LORD, all *you* His hosts,
You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.
22 Bless the LORD, all His works,
In all places of His dominion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Psalm 104

Praise to the Sovereign LORD for His Creation and Providence

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

O LORD my God, You are very great:
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
2 Who cover *Yourself* with light as *with* a garment,
Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters,
Who makes the clouds His chariot,
Who walks on the wings of the wind,
4 Who makes His angels spirits,
His ministers a flame of fire.

5 *You who* laid the foundations of the earth,
So *that* it should not be moved forever,
6 You covered it with the deep as *with* a garment;
The waters stood above the mountains.
7 At Your rebuke they fled;
At the voice of Your thunder they hastened away.
8 They went up over the mountains;
They went down into the valleys,
To the place which You founded for them.
9 You have set a boundary that they may not pass over,
That they may not return to cover the earth.

By them the birds of the heavens have their home; they sing among the branches.
PSALM 104:12

10 He sends the springs into the valleys;
They flow among the hills.
11 They give drink to every beast of the field;
The wild donkeys quench their thirst.
12 By them the birds of the heavens have their home;
They sing among the branches.
13 He waters the hills from His upper chambers;
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works.

14 He causes the grass to grow for the cattle,
And vegetation for the service of man,
That he may bring forth food from the earth,
15 And wine *that* makes glad the heart of man,

103:16 [a]Compare Job 7:10

Oil to make *his* face shine,
And bread *which* strengthens man's heart.
16 The trees of the LORD are full *of sap,*
The cedars of Lebanon which He planted,
17 Where the birds make their nests;
The stork has her home in the fir trees.
18 The high hills *are* for the wild goats;
The cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers.[a]

19 He appointed the moon for seasons;
The sun knows its going down.
20 You make darkness, and it is night,
In which all the beasts of the forest creep about.
21 The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their food from God.
22 *When* the sun rises, they gather together
And lie down in their dens.
23 Man goes out to his work
And to his labor until the evening.

24 O LORD, how manifold are Your works!
In wisdom You have made them all.
The earth is full of Your possessions—
25 This great and wide sea,
In which *are* innumerable teeming things,
Living things both small and great.
26 There the ships sail about;
There is that Leviathan
Which You have made to play there.

27 These all wait for You,
That You may give *them* their food in due season.
28 *What* You give them they gather in;
You open Your hand, they are filled with good.
29 You hide Your face, they are troubled;
You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.
30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;
And You renew the face of the earth.

31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
May the LORD rejoice in His works.
32 He looks on the earth, and it trembles;
He touches the hills, and they smoke.

I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
PSALM 104:33

33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
34 May my meditation be sweet to Him;
I will be glad in the LORD.
35 May sinners be consumed from the earth,
And the wicked be no more.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
Praise the LORD!

Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works!
PSALM 105:2

Psalm 105

The Eternal Faithfulness of the LORD

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
2 Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
3 Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
4 Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
5 Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
6 O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!

7 He *is* the LORD our God;
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
8 He remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,

104:18 [a]Or *rock hyrax* (compare Leviticus 11:5)

9 *The covenant* which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
10 And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,
11 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance,"
12 When they were few in number,
Indeed very few, and strangers in it.

13 When they went from one nation to another,
From *one* kingdom to another people,
14 He permitted no one to do them wrong;
Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes,
15 *Saying,* "Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."

16 Moreover He called for a famine in the land;
He destroyed all the provision of bread.
17 He sent a man before them—
Joseph—*who* was sold as a slave.
18 They hurt his feet with fetters,
He was laid in irons.
19 Until the time that his word came to pass,
The word of the LORD tested him.
20 The king sent and released him,
The ruler of the people let him go free.
21 He made him lord of his house,
And ruler of all his possessions,
22 To bind his princes at his pleasure,
And teach his elders wisdom.

23 Israel also came into Egypt,
And Jacob dwelt in the land of Ham.
24 He increased His people greatly,
And made them stronger than their enemies.
25 He turned their heart to hate His people,
To deal craftily with His servants.

26 He sent Moses His servant,
And Aaron whom He had chosen.
27 They performed His signs among them,
And wonders in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness, and made *it* dark;
And they did not rebel against His word.
29 He turned their waters into blood,
And killed their fish.
30 Their land abounded with frogs,
Even in the chambers of their kings.
31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
And lice in all their territory.
32 He gave them hail for rain,
And flaming fire in their land.
33 He struck their vines also, and their fig trees,
And splintered the trees of their territory.
34 He spoke, and locusts came,
Young locusts without number,
35 And ate up all the vegetation in their land,
And devoured the fruit of their ground.
36 He also destroyed all the firstborn in their land,
The first of all their strength.

37 He also brought them out with silver and gold,
And *there was* none feeble among His tribes.
38 Egypt was glad when they departed,
For the fear of them had fallen upon them.
39 He spread a cloud for a covering,
And fire to give light in the night.
40 *The people* asked, and He brought quail,
And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
It ran in the dry places *like* a river.

42 For He remembered His holy promise,
And Abraham His servant.
43 He brought out His people with joy,
His chosen ones with gladness.
44 He gave them the lands of the Gentiles,
And they inherited the labor of the nations,
45 That they might observe His statutes
And keep His laws.

Praise the LORD!

Psalm 106

Joy in Forgiveness of Israel's Sins

Praise the LORD!

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

2 Who can utter the mighty acts of
the LORD?
Who can declare all His praise?
3 Blessed *are* those who keep justice,
And he who does[a] righteousness at
all times!

4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favor
You have toward Your people.
Oh, visit me with Your salvation,
5 That I may see the benefit of Your
chosen ones,
That I may rejoice in the gladness of
Your nation,
That I may glory with Your inheritance.

6 We have sinned with our fathers,
We have committed iniquity,
We have done wickedly.
7 Our fathers in Egypt did not
understand Your wonders;
They did not remember the multitude
of Your mercies,
But rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea.

8 Nevertheless He saved them for His
name's sake,
That He might make His mighty power
known.
9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it
dried up;
So He led them through the depths,
As through the wilderness.
10 He saved them from the hand of him
who hated *them,*
And redeemed them from the hand of
the enemy.
11 The waters covered their enemies;
There was not one of them left.
12 Then they believed His words;
They sang His praise.

Then they believed His words;
they sang His praise.
PSALM 106:12

13 They soon forgot His works;
They did not wait for His counsel,
14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,
And tested God in the desert.
15 And He gave them their request,
But sent leanness into their soul.
16 When they envied Moses in the camp,
And Aaron the saint of the LORD,
17 The earth opened up and swallowed
Dathan,
And covered the faction of Abiram.
18 A fire was kindled in their company;
The flame burned up the wicked.

19 They made a calf in Horeb,
And worshiped the molded image.
20 Thus they changed their glory
Into the image of an ox that eats grass.
21 They forgot God their Savior,
Who had done great things in Egypt,
22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
Awesome things by the Red Sea.
23 Therefore He said that He would
destroy them,
Had not Moses His chosen one stood
before Him in the breach,
To turn away His wrath, lest He destroy
them.

24 Then they despised the pleasant land;
They did not believe His word,
25 But complained in their tents,
And did not heed the voice of the LORD.
26 Therefore He raised His hand *in an*
oath against them,
To overthrow them in the wilderness,
27 To overthrow their descendants among
the nations,
And to scatter them in the lands.

28 They joined themselves also to Baal
of Peor,
And ate sacrifices made to the dead.
29 Thus they provoked *Him* to anger with
their deeds,
And the plague broke out among them.
30 Then Phinehas stood up and intervened,
And the plague was stopped.
31 And that was accounted to him for
righteousness
To all generations forevermore.

32 They angered *Him* also at the waters
of strife,[a]
So that it went ill with Moses on
account of them;
33 Because they rebelled against His Spirit,
So that he spoke rashly with his lips.

106:3 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *those who do.*
106:32 [a]Or *Meribah*

34 They did not destroy the peoples,
Concerning whom the LORD had
commanded them,
35 But they mingled with the Gentiles
And learned their works;
36 They served their idols,
Which became a snare to them.
37 They even sacrificed their sons
And their daughters to demons,
38 And shed innocent blood,
The blood of their sons and
daughters,
Whom they sacrificed to the idols of
Canaan;
And the land was polluted with blood.
39 Thus they were defiled by their own
works,
And played the harlot by their own
deeds.

40 Therefore the wrath of the LORD was
kindled against His people,
So that He abhorred His own
inheritance.
41 And He gave them into the hand of
the Gentiles,
And those who hated them ruled over
them.
42 Their enemies also oppressed them,
And they were brought into subjection
under their hand.
43 Many times He delivered them;
But they rebelled in their counsel,
And were brought low for their
iniquity.

44 Nevertheless He regarded their
affliction,
When He heard their cry;
45 And for their sake He remembered
His covenant,
And relented according to the
multitude of His mercies.
46 He also made them to be pitied
By all those who carried them away
captive.

47 Save us, O LORD our God,
And gather us from among the Gentiles,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
To triumph in Your praise.

48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
And let all the people say, "Amen!"

Praise the LORD!

BOOK FIVE: Psalms 107—150

Psalm 107

Thanksgiving to the LORD for His Great Works of Deliverance

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is*
good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.
2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so,*
Whom He has redeemed from the
hand of the enemy,
3 And gathered out of the lands,
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a
desolate way;
They found no city to dwell in.
5 Hungry and thirsty,
Their soul fainted in them.
6 Then they cried out to the LORD in
their trouble,
And He delivered them out of their
distresses.
7 And He led them forth by the right way,
That they might go to a city for a
dwelling place.

8 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
9 For He satisfies the longing soul,
And fills the hungry soul with goodness.

10 Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Bound in affliction and irons—
11 Because they rebelled against the words of God,
And despised the counsel of the Most High,
12 Therefore He brought down their heart with labor;
They fell down, and *there was* none to help.
13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He saved them out of their distresses.
14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
And broke their chains in pieces.
15 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
16 For He has broken the gates of bronze,
And cut the bars of iron in two.

17 Fools, because of their transgression,
And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.
18 Their soul abhorred all manner of food,
And they drew near to the gates of death.
19 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He saved them out of their distresses.
20 He sent His word and healed them,
And delivered *them* from their destructions.
21 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
22 Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And declare His works with rejoicing.

23 Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters,
24 They see the works of the LORD,
And His wonders in the deep.
25 For He commands and raises the stormy wind,
Which lifts up the waves of the sea.
26 They mount up to the heavens,
They go down again to the depths;
Their soul melts because of trouble.
27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wits' end.
28 Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He brings them out of their distresses.
29 He calms the storm,
So that its waves are still.
30 Then they are glad because they are quiet;
So He guides them to their desired haven.
31 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
32 Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people,
And praise Him in the company of the elders.

33 He turns rivers into a wilderness,
And the watersprings into dry ground;
34 A fruitful land into barrenness,
For the wickedness of those who dwell in it.
35 He turns a wilderness into pools of water,
And dry land into watersprings.
36 There He makes the hungry dwell,
That they may establish a city for a dwelling place,
37 And sow fields and plant vineyards,
That they may yield a fruitful harvest.
38 He also blesses them, and they multiply greatly;
And He does not let their cattle decrease.

39 When they are diminished and brought low
Through oppression, affliction, and sorrow,

40 He pours contempt on princes,
And causes them to wander in the
wilderness *where there is* no way;
41 Yet He sets the poor on high, far from
affliction,
And makes *their* families like a flock.
42 The righteous see *it* and rejoice,
And all iniquity stops its mouth.

43 Whoever *is* wise will observe these
things,
And they will understand the
lovingkindness of the LORD.

I will praise You, O LORD, among the peoples, and I will sing praises to You among the nations.
PSALM 108:3

Psalm 108

Assurance of God's Victory over Enemies

A Song. A Psalm of David.

O God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and give praise, even with
my glory.
2 Awake, lute and harp!
I will awaken the dawn.
3 I will praise You, O LORD, among the
peoples,
And I will sing praises to You among
the nations.
4 For Your mercy *is* great above the
heavens,
And Your truth *reaches* to the clouds.

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
And Your glory above all the earth;
6 That Your beloved may be delivered,
Save *with* Your right hand, and hear me.

7 God has spoken in His holiness:
"I will rejoice;
I will divide Shechem
And measure out the Valley of Succoth.
8 Gilead *is* Mine; Manasseh *is* Mine;
Ephraim also *is* the helmet for My head;
Judah *is* My lawgiver.
9 Moab *is* My washpot;
Over Edom I will cast My shoe;
Over Philistia I will triumph."
10 Who will bring me *into* the strong city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
11 *Is it* not *You,* O God, *who* cast us off?
And *You,* O God, *who* did not go out
with our armies?
12 Give us help from trouble,
For the help of man is useless.
13 Through God we will do valiantly,
For *it is* He *who* shall tread down our
enemies.[a]

Psalm 109

Plea for Judgment of False Accusers

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Do not keep silent,
O God of my praise!
2 For the mouth of the wicked and the
mouth of the deceitful
Have opened against me;
They have spoken against me with a
lying tongue.
3 They have also surrounded me with
words of hatred,
And fought against me without a
cause.
4 In return for my love they are my
accusers,
But I *give myself to* prayer.
5 Thus they have rewarded me evil for
good,
And hatred for my love.

6 Set a wicked man over him,
And let an accuser[a] stand at his right
hand.
7 When he is judged, let him be found
guilty,
And let his prayer become sin.
8 Let his days be few,
And let another take his office.
9 Let his children be fatherless,
And his wife a widow.
10 Let his children continually be
vagabonds, and beg;
Let them seek *their bread*[a] also from
their desolate places.
11 Let the creditor seize all that he has,
And let strangers plunder his labor.

108:13 [a]Compare verses 6–13 with 60:5–12 **109:6** [a]Hebrew *satan*
109:10 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *be cast out*.

12 Let there be none to extend mercy to
him,
Nor let there be any to favor his
fatherless children.
13 Let his posterity be cut off,
And in the generation following let
their name be blotted out.

14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be
remembered before the LORD,
And let not the sin of his mother be
blotted out.
15 Let them be continually before the LORD,
That He may cut off the memory of
them from the earth;
16 Because he did not remember to show
mercy,
But persecuted the poor and needy man,
That he might even slay the broken in
heart.
17 As he loved cursing, so let it come to
him;
As he did not delight in blessing, so let
it be far from him.
18 As he clothed himself with cursing as
with his garment,
So let it enter his body like water,
And like oil into his bones.
19 Let it be to him like the garment which
covers him,
And for a belt with which he girds
himself continually.
20 *Let* this *be* the LORD's reward to my
accusers,
And to those who speak evil against my
person.

Music hath charms to soothe the savage beast, to soften rocks, to bend a knotted oak.

WILLIAM CONGREVE

21 But You, O GOD the Lord,
Deal with me for Your name's sake;
Because Your mercy *is* good, deliver me.
22 For I *am* poor and needy,
And my heart is wounded within me.
23 I am gone like a shadow when it
lengthens;
I am shaken off like a locust.
24 My knees are weak through fasting,
And my flesh is feeble from lack of
fatness.
25 I also have become a reproach to them;
When they look at me, they shake their
heads.

26 Help me, O LORD my God!
Oh, save me according to Your mercy,
27 That they may know that this *is* Your
hand—
That You, LORD, have done it!
28 Let them curse, but You bless;
When they arise, let them be ashamed,
But let Your servant rejoice.
29 Let my accusers be clothed with shame,
And let them cover themselves with
their own disgrace as with a mantle.

30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my
mouth;
Yes, I will praise Him among the
multitude.
31 For He shall stand at the right hand of
the poor,
To save *him* from those who condemn
him.

Psalm 110

Announcement of the Messiah's Reign

A Psalm of David.

The LORD said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your
footstool."
2 The LORD shall send the rod of Your
strength out of Zion.
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

3 Your people *shall be* volunteers
In the day of Your power;
In the beauties of holiness, from the
womb of the morning,
You have the dew of Your youth.
4 The LORD has sworn
And will not relent,
"You *are* a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek."

5 The Lord *is* at Your right hand;
He shall execute kings in the day of
His wrath.
6 He shall judge among the nations,

He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies,
He shall execute the heads of many countries.
7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside;
Therefore He shall lift up the head.

Psalm 111

Praise to God for His Faithfulness and Justice

Praise the LORD!

I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart,
In the assembly of the upright and *in* the congregation.

2 The works of the LORD *are* great,
Studied by all who have pleasure in them.
3 His work *is* honorable and glorious,
And His righteousness endures forever.
4 He has made His wonderful works to be remembered;
The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.
5 He has given food to those who fear Him;
He will ever be mindful of His covenant.
6 He has declared to His people the power of His works,
In giving them the heritage of the nations.

7 The works of His hands *are* verity and justice;
All His precepts *are* sure.
8 They stand fast forever and ever,
And are done in truth and uprightness.
9 He has sent redemption to His people;
He has commanded His covenant forever:
Holy and awesome *is* His name.

10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*.
His praise endures forever.

Psalm 112

The Blessed State of the Righteous

Praise the LORD!

Blessed *is* the man *who* fears the LORD,
Who delights greatly in His commandments.

2 His descendants will be mighty on earth;
The generation of the upright will be blessed.
3 Wealth and riches *will be* in his house,
And his righteousness endures forever.
4 Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness;
He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
5 A good man deals graciously and lends;
He will guide his affairs with discretion.
6 Surely he will never be shaken;
The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.
7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings;
His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.
8 His heart *is* established;
He will not be afraid,
Until he sees *his desire* upon his enemies.

9 He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever;
His horn will be exalted with honor.
10 The wicked will see *it* and be grieved;
He will gnash his teeth and melt away;
The desire of the wicked shall perish.

Psalm 113

The Majesty and Condescension of God

Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD,
Praise the name of the LORD!
2 Blessed be the name of the LORD
From this time forth and forevermore!
3 From the rising of the sun to its going down
The LORD's name *is* to be praised.

4 The LORD *is* high above all nations,
His glory above the heavens.
5 Who *is* like the LORD our God,
Who dwells on high,
6 Who humbles Himself to behold
The things that are in the heavens
and in the earth?

7 He raises the poor out of the dust,
And lifts the needy out of the
ash heap,
8 That He may seat *him* with princes—
With the princes of His people.
9 He grants the barren woman a home,
Like a joyful mother of children.

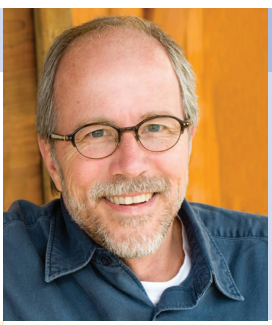
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 114

The Power of God in His Deliverance of Israel

When Israel went out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people of
strange language,
2 Judah became His sanctuary,
And Israel His dominion.

3 The sea saw *it* and fled;
Jordan turned back.
4 The mountains skipped like rams,
The little hills like lambs.
5 What ails you, O sea, that you fled?
O Jordan, *that* you turned back?
6 O mountains, *that* you skipped like rams?
O little hills, like lambs?



BUDDY GREENE • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Songwriter

For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. | PSALM 116:8, 9

As an American consumer, it's easy for me to think that salvation is about me—i.e., my forgiveness, my church, my Jesus, my heavenly home. While these are certainly by-products of God's salvation, the bigger picture really has to do with all that God is doing to reclaim, redeem, and restore a fallen world of which I am a small part. The biblical story is really about God getting back *all* that was lost in the Fall. This world is not a failed experiment. God tells John in Revelation 21:5, "I make all things new." That's what He's doing in me, and that's what He's doing in all of creation. This is why Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, "The creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God" (8:19). As I've gotten more acquainted with the big picture of salvation, I've discovered so many passages of scripture, like Romans 8 and 1 Peter 2, that have helped me to understand my purpose and reason for being as a child of God and follower of His Son, the servant-king, Jesus. I have the awesome privilege of being part of the evidence that the kingdom of God is indeed at hand. And what does that look like? I like the way Peter states it: "Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that . . . they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12).

7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob,
8 Who turned the rock *into* a pool of water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

Psalm 115

The Futility of Idols and the Trustworthiness of God

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,
But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy,
Because of Your truth.
2 Why should the Gentiles say,
"So where *is* their God?"

3 But our God *is* in heaven;
He does whatever He pleases.
4 Their idols *are* silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
5 They have mouths, but they do not speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;
6 They have ears, but they do not hear;
Noses they have, but they do not smell;
7 They have hands, but they do not handle;
Feet they have, but they do not walk;
Nor do they mutter through their throat.
8 Those who make them are like them;
So is everyone who trusts in them.

9 O Israel, trust in the LORD;
He *is* their help and their shield.
10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD;
He *is* their help and their shield.
11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD;
He *is* their help and their shield.

12 The LORD has been mindful of *us;*
He will bless us;
He will bless the house of Israel;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
13 He will bless those who fear the LORD,
Both small and great.

14 May the LORD give you increase more and more,
You and your children.
15 *May* you *be* blessed by the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.
16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD's;
But the earth He has given to the children of men.
17 The dead do not praise the LORD,
Nor any who go down into silence.
18 But we will bless the LORD
From this time forth and forevermore.

Praise the LORD!

Psalm 116

Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Death

I love the LORD, because He has heard
My voice *and* my supplications.
2 Because He has inclined His ear to me,
Therefore I will call *upon Him* as long as I live.

3 The pains of death surrounded me,
And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me;
I found trouble and sorrow.
4 Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
"O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!"

5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous;
Yes, our God *is* merciful.
6 The LORD preserves the simple;
I was brought low, and He saved me.
7 Return to your rest, O my soul,
For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

8 For You have delivered my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
9 I will walk before the LORD
In the land of the living.
10 I believed, therefore I spoke,
"I am greatly afflicted."
11 I said in my haste,
"All men *are* liars."

12 What shall I render to the LORD
For all His benefits toward me?
13 I will take up the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of the LORD.
14 I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD
Is the death of His saints.

16 O LORD, truly I *am* Your servant;
I *am* Your servant, the son of Your maidservant;
You have loosed my bonds.
17 I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people,
19 In the courts of the LORD's house,
In the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

Praise the LORD!

Psalm 117

Let All Peoples Praise the LORD

Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!
Laud Him, all you peoples!
2 For His merciful kindness is great toward us,
And the truth of the LORD *endures* forever.

Praise the LORD!

Psalm 118

Praise to God for His Everlasting Mercy

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

2 Let Israel now say,
"His mercy *endures* forever."
3 Let the house of Aaron now say,
"His mercy *endures* forever."
4 Let those who fear the LORD now say,
"His mercy *endures* forever."

5 I called on the LORD in distress;
The LORD answered me *and set me* in a broad place.
6 The LORD *is* on my side;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?
7 The LORD is for me among those who help me;

The LORD is my strength and song,
and He has become my salvation.
PSALM 118:14

Therefore I shall see *my desire* on those who hate me.
8 *It is* better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in man.
9 *It is* better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in princes.

10 All nations surrounded me,
But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
11 They surrounded me,
Yes, they surrounded me;
But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
12 They surrounded me like bees;
They were quenched like a fire of thorns;
For in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
13 You pushed me violently, that I might fall,
But the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD *is* my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation.[a]

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation
Is in the tents of the righteous;
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted;
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
17 I shall not die, but live,
And declare the works of the LORD.
18 The LORD has chastened me severely,
But He has not given me over to death.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness;
I will go through them,
And I will praise the LORD.
20 This is the gate of the LORD,
Through which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise You,
For You have answered me,
And have become my salvation.

22 The stone *which* the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.

118:14 [a]Compare Exodus 15:2

23 This was the LORD's doing;
It *is* marvelous in our eyes.
24 This *is* the day the LORD has made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Save now, I pray, O LORD;
O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.
26 Blessed *is* he who comes in the name
of the LORD!
We have blessed you from the house of
the LORD.
27 God *is* the LORD,
And He has given us light;
Bind the sacrifice with cords to the
horns of the altar.
28 You *are* my God, and I will praise You;
You are my God, I will exalt You.

29 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He*
is good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

Psalm 119

Meditations on the Excellencies of the Word of God

א ALEPH

Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the LORD!
2 Blessed *are* those who keep His
testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!
3 They also do no iniquity;
They walk in His ways.
4 You have commanded *us*
To keep Your precepts diligently.
5 Oh, that my ways were directed
To keep Your statutes!
6 Then I would not be ashamed,
When I look into all Your
commandments.
7 I will praise You with uprightness
of heart,
When I learn Your righteous
judgments.
8 I will keep Your statutes;
Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

ב BETH

9 How can a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed according to Your word.
10 With my whole heart I have sought You;
Oh, let me not wander from Your
commandments!
11 Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.
12 Blessed *are* You, O LORD!
Teach me Your statutes.
13 With my lips I have declared
All the judgments of Your mouth.
14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your
testimonies,
As *much as* in all riches.
15 I will meditate on Your precepts,
And contemplate Your ways.
16 I will delight myself in Your statutes;
I will not forget Your word.

ג GIMEL

17 Deal bountifully with Your servant,
That I may live and keep Your word.
18 Open my eyes, that I may see
Wondrous things from Your law.
19 I *am* a stranger in the earth;
Do not hide Your commandments
from me.
20 My soul breaks with longing
For Your judgments at all times.
21 You rebuke the proud—the cursed,
Who stray from Your commandments.
22 Remove from me reproach and contempt,
For I have kept Your testimonies.
23 Princes also sit *and* speak against me,
But Your servant meditates on Your
statutes.
24 Your testimonies also *are* my delight
And my counselors.

ד DALETH

25 My soul clings to the dust;
Revive me according to Your word.
26 I have declared my ways, and You
answered me;
Teach me Your statutes.
27 Make me understand the way of Your
precepts;
So shall I meditate on Your wonderful
works.
28 My soul melts from heaviness;
Strengthen me according to Your word.
29 Remove from me the way of lying,
And grant me Your law graciously.
30 I have chosen the way of truth;
Your judgments I have laid *before me*.

31 I cling to Your testimonies;
O LORD, do not put me to shame!
32 I will run the course of Your
commandments,
For You shall enlarge my heart.

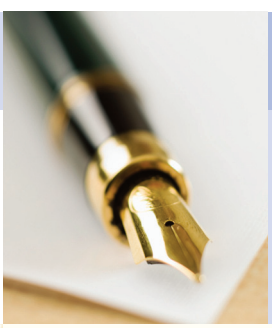
ה HE

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your
statutes,
And I shall keep it *to* the end.
34 Give me understanding, and I shall
keep Your law;
Indeed, I shall observe it with *my*
whole heart.
35 Make me walk in the path of Your
commandments,
For I delight in it.
36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies,
And not to covetousness.
37 Turn away my eyes from looking at
worthless things,
And revive me in Your way.[a]
38 Establish Your word to Your servant,
Who *is devoted* to fearing You.
39 Turn away my reproach which I dread,
For Your judgments *are* good.
40 Behold, I long for Your precepts;
Revive me in Your righteousness.

ו WAW

41 Let Your mercies come also to me,
O LORD—
Your salvation according to Your
word.
42 So shall I have an answer for him
who reproaches me,
For I trust in Your word.
43 And take not the word of truth utterly
out of my mouth,
For I have hoped in Your
ordinances.
44 So shall I keep Your law continually,
Forever and ever.
45 And I will walk at liberty,
For I seek Your precepts.
46 I will speak of Your testimonies also
before kings,
And will not be ashamed.
47 And I will delight myself in Your
commandments,
Which I love.
48 My hands also I will lift up to Your
commandments,
Which I love,
And I will meditate on Your statutes.

119:37 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Targum reads *Your words*.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all are Your servants. | PSALM 119:90, 91

My wife and I recently reflected on the lives of every member of our family. There would be very few of our family still numbered among the living if it were not for the truth of this verse. "All are Your servants." Medical technology is part of the "all things" that God uses as His handmaid. It is comforting for the Christian to realize that everything serves the Lord and His purposes on the earth. He is head over all things for the church. Every scientific discovery in every realm is simply an instrument of the Lord by which He performs His will. How safe we are in His faithful hands!

Your statutes have been my songs
in the house of my pilgrimage.
PSALM 119:54

ז ZAYIN

49 Remember the word to Your servant,
Upon which You have caused me to hope.
50 This *is* my comfort in my affliction,
For Your word has given me life.
51 The proud have me in great derision,
Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.
52 I remembered Your judgments of old, O LORD,
And have comforted myself.
53 Indignation has taken hold of me
Because of the wicked, who forsake Your law.
54 Your statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.
55 I remember Your name in the night, O LORD,
And I keep Your law.
56 This has become mine,
Because I kept Your precepts.

ח HETH

57 *You are* my portion, O LORD;
I have said that I would keep Your words.
58 I entreated Your favor with *my* whole heart;
Be merciful to me according to Your word.
59 I thought about my ways,
And turned my feet to Your testimonies.
60 I made haste, and did not delay
To keep Your commandments.
61 The cords of the wicked have bound me,
But I have not forgotten Your law.
62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.
63 I *am* a companion of all who fear You,
And of those who keep Your precepts.
64 The earth, O LORD, is full of Your mercy;
Teach me Your statutes.

ט TETH

65 You have dealt well with Your servant,
O LORD, according to Your word.
66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge,
For I believe Your commandments.
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,
But now I keep Your word.
68 You *are* good, and do good;
Teach me Your statutes.
69 The proud have forged a lie against me,
But I will keep Your precepts with *my* whole heart.
70 Their heart is as fat as grease,
But I delight in Your law.
71 *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.
72 The law of Your mouth *is* better to me
Than thousands of *coins of* gold and silver.

י YOD

73 Your hands have made me and fashioned me;
Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.
74 Those who fear You will be glad when they see me,
Because I have hoped in Your word.
75 I know, O LORD, that Your judgments *are* right,
And *that* in faithfulness You have afflicted me.
76 Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort,
According to Your word to Your servant.
77 Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live;
For Your law *is* my delight.
78 Let the proud be ashamed,
For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood;
But I will meditate on Your precepts.
79 Let those who fear You turn to me,
Those who know Your testimonies.
80 Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes,
That I may not be ashamed.

כ KAPH

81 My soul faints for Your salvation,
But I hope in Your word.
82 My eyes fail *from searching* Your word,
Saying, "When will You comfort me?"

83 For I have become like a wineskin in smoke,
Yet I do not forget Your statutes.
84 How many *are* the days of Your servant?
When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?
85 The proud have dug pits for me,
Which *is* not according to Your law.
86 All Your commandments *are* faithful;
They persecute me wrongfully;
Help me!
87 They almost made an end of me on earth,
But I did not forsake Your precepts.
88 Revive me according to Your lovingkindness,
So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.

ל LAMED

89 Forever, O LORD,
Your word is settled in heaven.
90 Your faithfulness *endures* to all generations;
You established the earth, and it abides.
91 They continue this day according to Your ordinances,
For all *are* Your servants.
92 Unless Your law *had been* my delight,
I would then have perished in my affliction.
93 I will never forget Your precepts,
For by them You have given me life.
94 I *am* Yours, save me;
For I have sought Your precepts.
95 The wicked wait for me to destroy me,
But I will consider Your testimonies.
96 I have seen the consummation of all perfection,
But Your commandment *is* exceedingly broad.

מ MEM

97 Oh, how I love Your law!
It *is* my meditation all the day.
98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies;
For they *are* ever with me.
99 I have more understanding than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies *are* my meditation.
100 I understand more than the ancients,
Because I keep Your precepts.
101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way,
That I may keep Your word.
102 I have not departed from Your judgments,
For You Yourself have taught me.
103 How sweet are Your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!
104 Through Your precepts I get understanding;
Therefore I hate every false way.

נ NUN

105 Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.
106 I have sworn and confirmed
That I will keep Your righteous judgments.
107 I am afflicted very much;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.
108 Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD,
And teach me Your judgments.
109 My life *is* continually in my hand,
Yet I do not forget Your law.
110 The wicked have laid a snare for me,
Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.
111 Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever,
For they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.
112 I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes
Forever, to the very end.

ס SAMEK

113 I hate the double-minded,
But I love Your law.
114 You *are* my hiding place and my shield;
I hope in Your word.
115 Depart from me, you evildoers,
For I will keep the commandments of my God!
116 Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live;
And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.
117 Hold me up, and I shall be safe,

And I shall observe Your statutes
continually.
118 You reject all those who stray from
Your statutes,
For their deceit *is* falsehood.
119 You put away all the wicked of the
earth *like* dross;
Therefore I love Your testimonies.
120 My flesh trembles for fear of You,
And I am afraid of Your judgments.

ע AYIN

121 I have done justice and righteousness;
Do not leave me to my oppressors.
122 Be surety for Your servant for good;
Do not let the proud oppress me.
123 My eyes fail *from seeking* Your salvation
And Your righteous word.
124 Deal with Your servant according to
Your mercy,
And teach me Your statutes.
125 I *am* Your servant;
Give me understanding,
That I may know Your testimonies.
126 *It is* time for *You* to act, O LORD,
For they have regarded Your law as void.
127 Therefore I love Your commandments
More than gold, yes, than fine gold!
128 Therefore all *Your* precepts *concerning*
all *things*
I consider *to be* right;
I hate every false way.

פ PE

129 Your testimonies are wonderful;
Therefore my soul keeps them.
130 The entrance of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.
131 I opened my mouth and panted,
For I longed for Your commandments.
132 Look upon me and be merciful to me,
As Your custom *is* toward those who
love Your name.
133 Direct my steps by Your word,
And let no iniquity have dominion
over me.
134 Redeem me from the oppression of man,
That I may keep Your precepts.
135 Make Your face shine upon Your servant,
And teach me Your statutes.
136 Rivers of water run down from my eyes,
Because *men* do not keep Your law.

צ TSADDE

137 Righteous *are* You, O LORD,
And upright *are* Your judgments.
138 Your testimonies, *which* You have
commanded,
Are righteous and very faithful.
139 My zeal has consumed me,
Because my enemies have forgotten
Your words.
140 Your word *is* very pure;
Therefore Your servant loves it.
141 I *am* small and despised,
Yet I do not forget Your precepts.
142 Your righteousness *is* an everlasting
righteousness,
And Your law *is* truth.
143 Trouble and anguish have overtaken me,
Yet Your commandments *are* my delights.
144 The righteousness of Your testimonies
is everlasting;
Give me understanding, and I shall live.

ק QOPH

145 I cry out with *my* whole heart;
Hear me, O LORD!
I will keep Your statutes.
146 I cry out to You;
Save me, and I will keep Your
testimonies.
147 I rise before the dawning of the
morning,
And cry for help;
I hope in Your word.
148 My eyes are awake through the *night*
watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.
149 Hear my voice according to Your
lovingkindness;
O LORD, revive me according to
Your justice.
150 They draw near who follow after
wickedness;
They are far from Your law.
151 You *are* near, O LORD,
And all Your commandments *are* truth.
152 Concerning Your testimonies,
I have known of old that You have
founded them forever.

ר RESH

153 Consider my affliction and deliver me,
For I do not forget Your law.

Unless the LORD builds the house,
they labor in vain who build it;
unless the LORD guards the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.
It is vain for you to rise up early,
to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows;
for so He gives His beloved sleep.
PSALM 127:1, 2

Psalm 127 is the workaholic's psalm: "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep." And how appropriate that the rest of the psalm is about the joy of having children and how important children well-familied are to our worth on this earth. The parent who forfeits this *real* gauge of our life's worth to build houses, guard our wealth, or make a great living has misplaced values. The implication is: Let God distribute the wealth and protect it. Be faithful at work and at home, but allow yourself to sleep at night. The true status symbol is the face of God casting the full light of His pleasure on us. That isn't won by success in the market; it is given freely to those whose priorities are in line.



154 Plead my cause and redeem me;
Revive me according to Your word.
155 Salvation *is* far from the wicked,
For they do not seek Your statutes.
156 Great *are* Your tender mercies, O LORD;
Revive me according to Your judgments.
157 Many *are* my persecutors and my enemies,
Yet I do not turn from Your testimonies.
158 I see the treacherous, and am disgusted,
Because they do not keep Your word.
159 Consider how I love Your precepts;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness.
160 The entirety of Your word *is* truth,
And every one of Your righteous judgments *endures* forever.

ש SHIN

161 Princes persecute me without a cause,
But my heart stands in awe of Your word.
162 I rejoice at Your word
As one who finds great treasure.
163 I hate and abhor lying,
But I love Your law.
164 Seven times a day I praise You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.
165 Great peace have those who love Your law,
And nothing causes them to stumble.
166 LORD, I hope for Your salvation,
And I do Your commandments.
167 My soul keeps Your testimonies,
And I love them exceedingly.
168 I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies,
For all my ways *are* before You.

ת TAU

169 Let my cry come before You, O LORD;
Give me understanding according to Your word.
170 Let my supplication come before You;
Deliver me according to Your word.
171 My lips shall utter praise,
For You teach me Your statutes.
172 My tongue shall speak of Your word,
For all Your commandments *are* righteousness.

173 Let Your hand become my help,
For I have chosen Your precepts.
174 I long for Your salvation, O LORD,
And Your law *is* my delight.
175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise You;
And let Your judgments help me.
176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep;
Seek Your servant,
For I do not forget Your commandments.

Psalm 120

Plea for Relief from Bitter Foes

A Song of Ascents.

In my distress I cried to the LORD,
And He heard me.
2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips
And from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given to you,
Or what shall be done to you,
You false tongue?
4 Sharp arrows of the warrior,
With coals of the broom tree!

5 Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech,
That I dwell among the tents of Kedar!
6 My soul has dwelt too long
With one who hates peace.
7 I *am for* peace;
But when I speak, they *are* for war.

Psalm 121

God the Help of Those Who Seek Him

A Song of Ascents.

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
From whence comes my help?
2 My help *comes* from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not allow your foot to be moved;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
4 Behold, He who keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD *is* your keeper;
The LORD *is* your shade at your right
hand.
6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
Nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;
He shall preserve your soul.
8 The LORD shall preserve your going out
and your coming in
From this time forth, and even
forevermore.

Psalm 122

The Joy of Going to the House of the LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go into the house of the LORD."
2 Our feet have been standing
Within your gates, O Jerusalem!

3 Jerusalem is built
As a city that is compact together,
4 Where the tribes go up,
The tribes of the LORD,
To the Testimony of Israel,
To give thanks to the name of the LORD.
5 For thrones are set there for judgment,
The thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May they prosper who love you.
7 Peace be within your walls,
Prosperity within your palaces."
8 For the sake of my brethren and
companions,
I will now say, "Peace *be* within you."
9 Because of the house of the LORD
our God
I will seek your good.

Psalm 123

Prayer for Relief from Contempt

A Song of Ascents.

Unto You I lift up my eyes,
O You who dwell in the heavens.
2 Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* to
the hand of their masters,
As the eyes of a maid to the hand of
her mistress,
So our eyes *look* to the LORD our God,
Until He has mercy on us.

3 Have mercy on us, O LORD, have
mercy on us!

For we are exceedingly filled with
contempt.
4 Our soul is exceedingly filled
With the scorn of those who are
at ease,
With the contempt of the proud.

Psalm 124

The Lord the Defense of His People

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

"If it had not been the Lord who was on
our side,"
Let Israel now say—
2 "If it had not been the Lord who was
on our side,
When men rose up against us,
3 Then they would have swallowed us
alive,
When their wrath was kindled
against us;
4 Then the waters would have
overwhelmed us,
The stream would have gone over
our soul;
5 Then the swollen waters
Would have gone over our soul."
6 Blessed *be* the Lord,
Who has not given us *as* prey to their
teeth.
7 Our soul has escaped as a bird from
the snare of the fowlers;[a]
The snare is broken, and we have
escaped.
8 Our help *is* in the name of the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 125

The Lord the Strength of His People

A Song of Ascents.

Those who trust in the Lord
Are like Mount Zion,
Which cannot be moved, *but* abides
forever.
2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
So the Lord surrounds His people
From this time forth and forever.

3 For the scepter of wickedness shall
not rest
On the land allotted to the righteous,
Lest the righteous reach out their
hands to iniquity.

124:7 [a]That is, persons who catch birds in a trap or snare



DAVID TEEMS • Author, Formerly with *David Teems and The Calling*

Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me. Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever. | PSALM 131

The quiet of God is anything but empty. It is as alive as His Word is alive, as He is alive. The quiet that David refers to in Psalm 131 is a living quiet, filled with the life of God. To pursue this quiet is to pursue God Himself—emptiness and fullness conflated together, completing one another in the mystery of God. But even the best of writers can only hope to awaken the appetite in others, to aggravate desire. We seek too fervently the quiet for ourselves.

4 Do good, O LORD, to *those who are* good,
And to *those who are* upright in their hearts.

5 As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways,
The LORD shall lead them away
With the workers of iniquity.

Peace *be* upon Israel!

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."
PSALM 126:2

Psalm 126

A Joyful Return to Zion

A Song of Ascents.

When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion,
We were like those who dream.
2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing.
Then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
3 The LORD has done great things for us,
And we are glad.

4 Bring back our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the South.

5 Those who sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
6 He who continually goes forth weeping,
Bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,
Bringing his sheaves *with him.*

Psalm 127

Laboring and Prospering with the LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.

Unless the LORD builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless the LORD guards the city,
The watchman stays awake in vain.
2 *It is* vain for you to rise up early,
To sit up late,
To eat the bread of sorrows;
For so He gives His beloved sleep.

3 Behold, children *are* a heritage from the LORD,
The fruit of the womb *is* a reward.
4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So *are* the children of one's youth.
5 Happy *is* the man who has his quiver full of them;
They shall not be ashamed,
But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128

Blessings of Those Who Fear the LORD

A Song of Ascents.

Blessed *is* every one who fears the LORD,
Who walks in His ways.

2 When you eat the labor of your hands,
You *shall be* happy, and *it shall be* well with you.
3 Your wife *shall be* like a fruitful vine
In the very heart of your house,
Your children like olive plants
All around your table.
4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
Who fears the LORD.

5 The LORD bless you out of Zion,
And may you see the good of Jerusalem
All the days of your life.
6 Yes, may you see your children's children.

Peace *be* upon Israel!

Psalm 129

Song of Victory over Zion's Enemies

Song of Ascents.

"Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth,"
Let Israel now say—
2 "Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth;
Yet they have not prevailed against me.

3 The plowers plowed on my back;
They made their furrows long."
4 The LORD *is* righteous;
He has cut in pieces the cords of
the wicked.

5 Let all those who hate Zion
Be put to shame and turned back.
6 Let them be as the grass *on* the
housetops,
Which withers before it grows up,
7 With which the reaper does not fill
his hand,
Nor he who binds sheaves, his arms.
8 Neither let those who pass by
them say,
"The blessing of the LORD *be*
upon you;
We bless you in the name of
the LORD!"

Psalm 130

Waiting for the Redemption of the LORD

A Song of Ascents.

Out of the depths I have cried to You,
O LORD;
2 Lord, hear my voice!
Let Your ears be attentive
To the voice of my supplications.

3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
4 But *there is* forgiveness with You,
That You may be feared.

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
And in His word I do hope.
6 My soul *waits* for the Lord
More than those who watch for the
morning—



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! | PSALM 133:1

On one of Doug's tours, we were driving through the Garden Spot of America, the beautiful San Joaquin Valley of California, and as the bus topped a rise in the road, those aboard looked out on a gorgeous, huge, well-cared-for truck farm. In the garden was a family of five people holding hands—mother, father, and three children. The strange thing was, they had birds sitting all over them! A closer look revealed that the family was a family of scarecrows put up to scare the birds away from the vegetables.

Why weren't the birds scared? I don't know.

I suspect it has something to do with the fact that the scarecrows were a family. A family is a disarming unit. A family dispels fear. Five people holding hands and happily making their way through each day encounter far fewer fears than one person fighting the battles alone.

Birds are smart. One scarecrow with clothes flapping in the wind could give a bird a fright. But a family? P'shaw!

Yes, more than those who watch for the morning.

7 O Israel, hope in the LORD;
For with the LORD *there is* mercy,
And with Him *is* abundant redemption.
8 And He shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.

Psalm 131

Simple Trust in the LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

LORD, my heart is not haughty,
Nor my eyes lofty.
Neither do I concern myself with great matters,
Nor with things too profound for me.

2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul,
Like a weaned child with his mother;
Like a weaned child *is* my soul within me.

3 O Israel, hope in the LORD
From this time forth and forever.

Psalm 132

The Eternal Dwelling of God in Zion

A Song of Ascents.

LORD, remember David
And all his afflictions;
2 How he swore to the LORD,
And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob:
3 "Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house,
Or go up to the comfort of my bed;
4 I will not give sleep to my eyes
Or slumber to my eyelids,
5 Until I find a place for the LORD,
A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

6 Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah;
We found it in the fields of the woods.[a]
7 Let us go into His tabernacle;
Let us worship at His footstool.
8 Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place,
You and the ark of Your strength.
9 Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness,
And let Your saints shout for joy.

It is God who gives us the spirit of worship (Psalm 133:3), and it is what we know of God that produces this spirit of worship. We might say that worship is simply theology, doctrine, what we think about God, going into top gear! Instead of merely thinking about Him, we tell Him, in prayer and praise and song, how great and glorious we believe Him to be!

SINCLAIR FERGUSON

10 For Your servant David's sake,
Do not turn away the face of Your Anointed.

11 The LORD has sworn *in* truth to David;
He will not turn from it:
"I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body.
12 If your sons will keep My covenant
And My testimony which I shall teach them,
Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore."

13 For the LORD has chosen Zion;
He has desired *it* for His dwelling place:
14 "This *is* My resting place forever;
Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
15 I will abundantly bless her provision;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation,
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
17 There I will make the horn of David grow;
I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed.
18 His enemies I will clothe with shame,
But upon Himself His crown shall flourish."

Psalm 133

Blessed Unity of the People of God

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 *It is* like the precious oil upon the head,

132:6 [a]Hebrew *Jaar*

Running down on the beard,
The beard of Aaron,
Running down on the edge of his
garments.
3 *It is* like the dew of Hermon,
Descending upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the LORD commanded the
blessing—
Life forevermore.

Psalm 134

Praising the LORD in His House at Night

A Song of Ascents.

Behold, bless the LORD,
All *you* servants of the LORD,
Who by night stand in the house
of the LORD!
2 Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary,
And bless the LORD.
3 The LORD who made heaven and earth
Bless you from Zion!

Psalm 135

Praise to God in Creation and Redemption

Praise the LORD!

Praise the name of the LORD;
Praise *Him,* O you servants of the LORD!
2 You who stand in the house of the LORD,
In the courts of the house of our God,
3 Praise the LORD, for the LORD *is* good;
Sing praises to His name, for *it is*
pleasant.



MYLON LEFEVRE • Homecoming Artist, Evangelist, Formerly with *Broken Heart* and *The LeFevres*

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. | PSALMS 136:1

Isn't it good to know that we don't have to talk God into being good or doing good things in our lives every day? His mercy is fresh every morning, and His love lasts forever. He invites us to "taste and see" just how good He is, for "blessed is the man who trusts in Him" (Ps. 34:8).

The Lord has been good to me all of my life. I made a lot of mistakes in my youth because of my pride and rebellion. But when I humbled myself and took responsibility for my sins, He forgave me and let me start my life over. He has been proving His goodness to me every day since I started to trust Him.

There have been times when, as the psalmist says, "I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living" (Ps. 27:13). David, too, must have felt this despair at times, yet the Bible says King David was a man after God's own heart. One of the ways that King David honored the Lord was by *expecting* to experience the goodness of God in his life. We don't have to have a perfect record to believe that the Lord will prove His goodness to anyone who trusts Him. I know this is true because He has shown His enduring goodness to me.

Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praises to His name, for it is pleasant.
PSALM 135:3

4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself,
Israel for His special treasure.

5 For I know that the LORD *is* great,
And our Lord *is* above all gods.
6 Whatever the LORD pleases He does,
In heaven and in earth,
In the seas and in all deep places.
7 He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;
He makes lightning for the rain;
He brings the wind out of His treasuries.

8 He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt,
Both of man and beast.
9 He sent signs and wonders into the midst of you, O Egypt,
Upon Pharaoh and all his servants.
10 He defeated many nations
And slew mighty kings—
11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan—
12 And gave their land *as* a heritage,
A heritage to Israel His people.

13 Your name, O LORD, *endures* forever,
Your fame, O LORD, throughout all generations.
14 For the LORD will judge His people,
And He will have compassion on His servants.

15 The idols of the nations *are* silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
16 They have mouths, but they do not speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;
17 They have ears, but they do not hear;
Nor is there *any* breath in their mouths.
18 Those who make them are like them;
So is everyone who trusts in them.

19 Bless the LORD, O house of Israel!
Bless the LORD, O house of Aaron!
20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi!
You who fear the LORD, bless the LORD!
21 Blessed be the LORD out of Zion,
Who dwells in Jerusalem!

Praise the LORD!

Psalm 136

Thanksgiving to God for His Enduring Mercy

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.
2 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods!
For His mercy *endures* forever.
3 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords!
For His mercy *endures* forever:
4 To Him who alone does great wonders,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
5 To Him who by wisdom made the heavens,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
6 To Him who laid out the earth above the waters,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
7 To Him who made great lights,
For His mercy *endures* forever—
8 The sun to rule by day,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
9 The moon and stars to rule by night,
For His mercy *endures* forever.

10 To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
11 And brought out Israel from among them,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
12 With a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
13 To Him who divided the Red Sea in two,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
14 And made Israel pass through the midst of it,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
16 To Him who led His people through the wilderness,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
17 To Him who struck down great kings,
For His mercy *endures* forever;

18 And slew famous kings,
For His mercy *endures* forever—
19 Sihon king of the Amorites,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
20 And Og king of Bashan,
For His mercy *endures* forever—
21 And gave their land as a heritage,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
22 A heritage to Israel His servant,
For His mercy *endures* forever.

23 Who remembered us in our lowly state,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
24 And rescued us from our enemies,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
25 Who gives food to all flesh,
For His mercy *endures* forever.

26 Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

Psalm 137

Longing for Zion in a Foreign Land

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.
2 We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst of it.
3 For there those who carried us away
captive asked of us a song,
And those who plundered us *requested*
mirth,
Saying, "Sing us *one* of the songs of
Zion!"

4 How shall we sing the LORD's song
In a foreign land?
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *its skill!*
6 If I do not remember you,



BOB AND JEANNE JOHNSON • Homecoming Artists, Formerly with *The Speers*

O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. | PSALM 139:1–5

Sometimes it's hard to understand how God can take a negative in our lives and turn it around to make something beautiful. Because evil is present in our fallen world, we fail, our parents fail, but God uses those failures to fulfill His purpose for our lives, to love Him and serve Him and strive to be like Him. We are called by the wooing of the Holy Spirit when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Just as a beautiful tapestry is woven with threads of gold, silver, and dark threads, the master weaver uses the good and bad in our lives to bring honor to His name. Only God can see the whole picture of our lives and put it all together for our good and His glory.

Lord, help me to put total trust in You for my life, knowing You do all things very well. We are called by the wooing of the Holy Spirit when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord.

How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?
PSALM 137:4

Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth—
If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

7 Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom
The day of Jerusalem,
Who said, "Raze *it,* raze *it,*
To its very foundation!"

8 O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed,
Happy the one who repays you as you have served us!
9 Happy the one who takes and dashes
Your little ones against the rock!

Psalm 138

The LORD's Goodness to the Faithful

A Psalm of David.

I will praise You with my whole heart;
Before the gods I will sing praises to You.
2 I will worship toward Your holy temple,
And praise Your name
For Your lovingkindness and Your truth;
For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.
3 In the day when I cried out, You answered me,
And made me bold *with* strength in my soul.

4 All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD,
When they hear the words of Your mouth.
5 Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
For great *is* the glory of the LORD.
6 Though the LORD *is* on high,
Yet He regards the lowly;
But the proud He knows from afar.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
You will revive me;
You will stretch out Your hand
Against the wrath of my enemies,
And Your right hand will save me.
8 The LORD will perfect *that which* concerns me;
Your mercy, O LORD, *endures* forever;
Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD.
PSALM 138:5

Psalm 139

God's Perfect Knowledge of Man

For the Chief Musician.
A Psalm of David.

O LORD, You have searched me and known *me.*
2 You know my sitting down and my rising up;
You understand my thought afar off.
3 You comprehend my path and my lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.
4 For *there is* not a word on my tongue,
But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
5 You have hedged me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.
6 *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot *attain* it.

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
8 If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You *are there.*
9 *If* I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall[a] on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me;
12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,

139:11 [a]Vulgate and Symmachus read *cover.*

But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light *are* both
alike *to You.*

13 For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.
14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and*
wonderfully made;[a]
Marvelous are Your works,
And *that* my soul knows very well.
15 My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the lowest
parts of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw my substance, being
yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When *as yet there were* none of them.

17 How precious also are Your thoughts
to me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
18 *If* I should count them, they would be
more in number than the sand;
When I awake, I am still with You.

19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked,
O God!
Depart from me, therefore, you
bloodthirsty men.
20 For they speak against You
wickedly;
Your enemies take *Your name* in vain.[a]
21 Do I not hate them, O LORD, who
hate You?
And do I not loathe those who rise up
against You?
22 I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.

139:14 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *You are fearfully wonderful.* **139:20** [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *They take your cities in vain.*



CHARLOTTE RITCHIE • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Formerly with *The Easters*

Where can I go from Your spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. | PSALM 139:7–10

I was a very shy little girl growing up. I prayed that God would make me invisible because I was so afraid for people to look at me or speak to me. How ironic that as an adult, God called me to a life of traveling, singing, and speaking in front of thousands of people. I am an example of God's wonderful sense of humor.

At first glance you might think that I have it all together and life is always good. I will say that God has given far more than I deserve and I am very blessed. But we all go through the ups and downs of life and experience both bright and very dark days.

The year 2006 brought many changes to my life. Within a ten-week period, I attended four funerals, one of which was for my mom, who passed away from a sudden heart attack. In the time that followed I found myself in a very strange place. I had the responsibilities of being a wife, mom, and employee. Every day I got up and put on my "everything is fine" mask

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
24 And see if *there is any* wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 140

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil Men

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men;
Preserve me from violent men,
2 Who plan evil things in *their* hearts;
They continually gather together *for* war.
3 They sharpen their tongues like a serpent;
The poison of asps *is* under their lips.
Selah

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked;
Preserve me from violent men,
Who have purposed to make my steps stumble.
5 The proud have hidden a snare for me, and cords;
They have spread a net by the wayside;
They have set traps for me.
Selah

6 I said to the LORD: "You *are* my God;
Hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.
7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation,
You have covered my head in the day of battle.
8 Do not grant, O LORD, the desires of the wicked;
Do not further his *wicked* scheme,
Lest they be exalted.
Selah

and tried to cope with my life. But when I was alone and quiet, I began to question everything and felt that I was slowly being smothered by fear and anxiety. A very close friend once said, "Adversity will pull you away from God or drive you to Him," and for me it was the latter. I began studying the Scriptures, desperately searching for comfort. I love the Book of Psalms, and the particular passage that caught my attention was Psalm 139. It reminded me that we are intentionally and wonderfully created. God knows us better than we could ever know ourselves, and He loves us with a love and compassion that we can't comprehend. David asks in verse seven, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?" The short answer is nowhere. God is everywhere, and because of that nothing can separate Him from those who love Him. Even the darkest night and the most crippling fear can't estrange us from the Father. Paul affirms this in Romans 8:38, 39: nothing that has ever been or will be can ever separate us from His love. Psalm 139:9, 10 says that even "in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me."

Fear has many faces. A child might be afraid of monsters under the bed; I was afraid of being in front of people. You might fear death staring you in the face. But whatever fear we face, God is greater—and we can face it with assurance that God is greater than our circumstances, and He will see us through. There are things I will never understand this side of eternity, but seeing God's faithfulness in my life and in the lives of others, I am learning to trust God more each day.

Praise You

There's no place where You're not there;
I'll never drift from Your love and care.
There's not a thing about me that You don't know.
The wings of the morning will take me to You;
The blackness of night, Your light will shine through;
You're already there no matter where I may go.
Even before I came to be,
Your loving eyes were looking at me—
You're even closer than the very breath I take.
Mother and father, more than a friend to me,
Beginning and ending and living of life to me,
The song I find myself singing when I awake.

So I will praise You! Lord, I praise You!
Now I praise You for bearing me up
And giving me wings, for lifting my sights
To heavenly things, for being the songs
I can't help but sing—praise You!

Look at me, Lord, I'm open to You.
Do anything that You want to do—
You know me even better than I know myself.
I'll not be afraid of what You can see
'Cause You know the person inside of me;
I won't even try to hide what You know so well.
Lord, just be patient with my mistakes;
I want to be Yours whatever it takes.
I've learned that life without You is no life at all,
Failures and talents and schemes I bring to You;
Aspirations and dreams I sing to You—
I'll just be here ready whenever You call.

So I will praise You! Lord, I praise You!
Now I praise You for bearing me up
And giving me wings, for lifting my sights
To heavenly things, for being the song
I can't help but sing—praise You!

I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.

PSALM 139:14

Our whole family spent a week on a lovely beach lined by palm trees and tropical flowers. One day while the children played at the water's edge with my mother (who was always the biggest kid of all), Bill and I took a walk down the beach. We were still quite a distance away when we saw a child running toward us, waving his arms. Soon we realized it was Benjy, urgently trying to tell us something. We ran to meet him.

"Suzanne lost her glasses in the ocean!" he yelled over the thunder of the surf. "She was picking up shells and a big wave came in and knocked off her glasses. The tide washed them out to sea!"

"How long ago?" I asked, thinking about how quickly these strong currents had been carrying things—even children—down the beach.

"About fifteen minutes ago. We've been looking for them ever since."

My mind raced. A coral reef ran parallel to the shoreline about a hundred feet out. There were urgent warnings of an undertow—"Strong Currents." Objects like sand toys or rafts caught by a wave had been carried down the beach as fast as the children could run to catch them.

By now we were shouting back and forth to Suzanne. "Where did you lose them?" I yelled.

"Right here. I was standing right here!"

She was knee-deep in water as the tide was coming in. "I can't see a thing, Mother. What are we going to do?"

"Let's pray," I said and I took her two hands in mine.

Then I thought to myself, *What are you doing? You're going to ruin this kid's faith. Those glasses have long since been pulled out to sea by the undertow, most likely smashed to bits against the coral reef. If we even find any pieces, they will have washed ashore far down the beach!*

But I was too far into this to turn back. Holding Suzanne's hands and standing knee-deep in water, I prayed: "Jesus, You know how much Suzanne

needs her glasses, and that we are far from home and know no doctors to have them replaced here. We are Your children and this is Your ocean. You know where the glasses are, so we're asking You to send them back."

Just then Suzanne squeezed my hand and interrupted my prayer. "Mother! Something just hit my leg!" She let go of my hand, reached down into the water, and pulled out her glasses. They were in one piece and not even scratched!

We danced a jig of praise and she ran off to tell the others who were searching farther down the beach.

Much later that evening, after we'd had our dinner and the kids were ready for bed, I took out the Bible and opened it to Psalms to read something that might fit the sounds of the surf pounding the shore outside our room's open patio doors. I chose a psalm we'd read many times, but never had we heard it as we did that night.

When we had finished all of Psalm 139, we could hardly believe that God's Word had been so specific for us . . . so familiar yet as new and fresh as this day's miracle. Together we thanked God that He is a God who chose to be involved in our lives, that truly He had scheduled our days; we marveled at the truth that we couldn't even "count how many times a day [His] thoughts turn toward [us]" (Ps. 139:18 TLB).

Psalm 139 has returned many times to visit our family. Our children are now reading it to their children. Soon after that trip Bill and I wrote the psalm into a song we called "Praise You." It has been arranged for choirs and recorded by various artists. But it will always be for us a reminder of the day a little girl prayed with her mother on an island beach for a pair of glasses lost at sea.



9 "*As for* the head of those who
surround me,
Let the evil of their lips cover them;
10 Let burning coals fall upon them;
Let them be cast into the fire,
Into deep pits, that they rise not
up again.
11 Let not a slanderer be established in
the earth;
Let evil hunt the violent man to
overthrow *him.*"

12 I know that the LORD will maintain
The cause of the afflicted,
And justice for the poor.
13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks
to Your name;
The upright shall dwell in Your presence.

Psalm 141

Prayer for Safekeeping from Wickedness

A Psalm of David.

LORD, I cry out to You;
Make haste to me!
Give ear to my voice when I cry out
to You.
2 Let my prayer be set before You *as*
incense,
The lifting up of my hands *as* the
evening sacrifice.

3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;
Keep watch over the door of my lips.
4 Do not incline my heart to any evil
thing,
To practice wicked works
With men who work iniquity;
And do not let me eat of their
delicacies.

5 Let the righteous strike me;
It shall be a kindness.
And let him rebuke me;
It shall be as excellent oil;
Let my head not refuse it.

For still my prayer *is* against the deeds
of the wicked.
6 Their judges are overthrown by the
sides of the cliff,
And they hear my words, for they
are sweet.

7 Our bones are scattered at the mouth
of the grave,
As when one plows and breaks up
the earth.

8 But my eyes *are* upon You, O GOD
the Lord;
In You I take refuge;
Do not leave my soul destitute.
9 Keep me from the snares they have
laid for me,
And from the traps of the workers of
iniquity.
10 Let the wicked fall into their
own nets,
While I escape safely.

Psalm 142

A Plea for Relief from Persecutors

A Contemplation[a] of David.
A Prayer when he was in the cave.

I cry out to the LORD with my voice;
With my voice to the LORD I make my
supplication.
2 I pour out my complaint before Him;
I declare before Him my trouble.

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed
within me,
Then You knew my path.
In the way in which I walk
They have secretly set a snare for me.
4 Look on *my* right hand and see,
For *there is* no one who acknowledges me;
Refuge has failed me;
No one cares for my soul.

5 I cried out to You, O LORD:
I said, "You *are* my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.
6 Attend to my cry,
For I am brought very low;
Deliver me from my persecutors,
For they are stronger than I.
7 Bring my soul out of prison,
That I may praise Your name;
The righteous shall surround me,
For You shall deal bountifully
with me."

142:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

Psalm 143

An Earnest Appeal for Guidance and Deliverance

A Psalm of David.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
Give ear to my supplications!
In Your faithfulness answer me,
And in Your righteousness.
2 Do not enter into judgment with
Your servant,
For in Your sight no one living is
righteous.

3 For the enemy has persecuted my soul;
He has crushed my life to the ground;
He has made me dwell in darkness,
Like those who have long been dead.
4 Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed
within me;
My heart within me is distressed.

5 I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all Your works;
I muse on the work of Your hands.
6 I spread out my hands to You;
My soul *longs* for You like a thirsty land.
Selah

7 Answer me speedily, O LORD;
My spirit fails!
Do not hide Your face from me,
Lest I be like those who go down into
the pit.
8 Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness
in the morning,
For in You do I trust;
Cause me to know the way in which I
should walk,
For I lift up my soul to You.

9 Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies;
In You I take shelter.[a]
10 Teach me to do Your will,
For You *are* my God;
Your Spirit *is* good.
Lead me in the land of uprightness.

11 Revive me, O LORD, for Your name's sake!
For Your righteousness' sake bring my
soul out of trouble.
12 In Your mercy cut off my enemies,
And destroy all those who afflict my soul;
For I *am* Your servant.

I will sing a new song to You,
O God; on a harp of ten strings
I will sing praises to You.
PSALM 144:9

Psalm 144

A Song to the LORD Who Preserves and Prospers His People

A Psalm of David.

Blessed *be* the LORD my Rock,
Who trains my hands for war,
And my fingers for battle—
2 My lovingkindness and my fortress,
My high tower and my deliverer,
My shield and *the One* in whom I
take refuge,
Who subdues my people[a] under me.

3 LORD, what *is* man, that You take
knowledge of him?
Or the son of man, that You are
mindful of him?
4 Man is like a breath;
His days *are* like a passing shadow.

5 Bow down Your heavens, O LORD, and
come down;
Touch the mountains, and they shall
smoke.
6 Flash forth lightning and scatter
them;
Shoot out Your arrows and destroy
them.
7 Stretch out Your hand from above;
Rescue me and deliver me out of
great waters,
From the hand of foreigners,
8 Whose mouth speaks lying words,
And whose right hand *is* a right hand
of falsehood.

9 I will sing a new song to You, O God;
On a harp of ten strings I will sing
praises to You,
10 *The One* who gives salvation to kings,
Who delivers David His servant
From the deadly sword.

143:9 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *To You I flee.* **144:2** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *the peoples* (compare 18:47).

11 Rescue me and deliver me from the
hand of foreigners,
Whose mouth speaks lying words,
And whose right hand *is* a right hand
of falsehood—
12 That our sons *may be* as plants grown
up in their youth;
That our daughters *may be* as pillars,
Sculptured in palace style;
13 *That* our barns *may be* full,
Supplying all kinds of produce;
That our sheep may bring forth
thousands
And ten thousands in our fields;
14 *That* our oxen *may be* well laden;
That there be no breaking in or going out;
That there be no outcry in our streets.
15 Happy *are* the people who are in such
a state;
Happy *are* the people whose God *is*
the LORD!

They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness.
PSALM 145:7

Psalm 145

A Song of God's Majesty and Love

A Praise of David.

I will extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever and
ever.
2 Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever
and ever.
3 Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be
praised;
And His greatness *is* unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise Your works
to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.
5 I[a] will meditate on the glorious
splendor of Your majesty,
And on Your wondrous works.[b]
6 *Men* shall speak of the might of Your
awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.
7 They shall utter the memory of Your
great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.

8 The LORD *is* gracious and full of
compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy.
9 The LORD *is* good to all,
And His tender mercies *are* over all
His works.

10 All Your works shall praise You, O LORD,
And Your saints shall bless You.
11 They shall speak of the glory of Your
kingdom,
And talk of Your power,
12 To make known to the sons of men His
mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of His
kingdom.
13 Your kingdom *is* an everlasting
kingdom,
And Your dominion *endures*
throughout all generations.[a]

14 The LORD upholds all who fall,
And raises up all *who are* bowed down.
15 The eyes of all look expectantly to You,
And You give them their food in due
season.
16 You open Your hand
And satisfy the desire of every living
thing.

17 The LORD *is* righteous in all His ways,
Gracious in all His works.
18 The LORD *is* near to all who call upon
Him,
To all who call upon Him in truth.
19 He will fulfill the desire of those who
fear Him;
He also will hear their cry and save
them.
20 The LORD preserves all who love Him,
But all the wicked He will destroy.
21 My mouth shall speak the praise of
the LORD,
And all flesh shall bless His holy name
Forever and ever.

145:5 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *They*. [b]Literally *on the words of Your wondrous works* **145:13** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate add *The LORD is faithful in all His words, And holy in all His works.*

Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

PSALM 150

"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," originally called "Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren," was written by German Joachim Neander. Although he studied theology in his youth, he was rebellious and actually heckled worshipers entering St. Martin's Church in Bremen, Germany. But when he actually listened to the sermon, he was convicted and accepted Christ as his Savior. Then, after his conversion, he began to teach Latin at a school in Dusseldorf, where he enjoyed taking walks in the nearby valley of the Dussel River. Basking in the beauty of God's creation, Neander was inspired to write poems and hymns, and eventually he held gatherings there and delivered sermons.

After Neander entered the ministry full time, he contracted tuberculosis. As he struggled with the disease, he wrote his most famous hymn, based on Psalms 103 and 150, choosing to focus on praising God as long as he still "hath life and breath." Rather than dwell on his own frailty and human limitations, Neander instead opted to "ponder anew what the Almighty can do." And in doing so, he left an remarkable legacy after his death that same year at age thirty. "Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren" became a favorite of Prussian king Frederick William III and was translated into several languages, including the popular English translation, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," by Catherine Winkworth in 1863.

Considered by many to be the first significant hymn writer after the Reformation, Neander was honored a hundred years after his death when his favorite valley, that very valley where he wrote his hymns and preached his sermons, was named *Neanderthal*, or "Neander's Valley." Incidentally, in 1856, miners made a remarkable discovery there—ancient human bones, later coined by scientists as "Neanderthals."

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Joachim Neander | 1680

1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the king of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
Praise Him in glad adoration.

2. Praise to the Lord, who over all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires ever have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

3. Praise to the Lord, who hath fearfully, wondrously, made thee;
Health hath vouchsafed and, when heedlessly falling, hath stayed thee.
What need or grief ever hath failed of relief?
Wings of His mercy did shade thee.

4. Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

5. Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him.
Let the Amen sound from His people again,
Gladly for aye we adore Him.

Psalm 146

The Happiness of Those Whose Help Is the Lord

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!
2 While I live I will praise the Lord;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.
PSALM 146:2

3 Do not put your trust in princes,
Nor in a son of man, in whom *there is* no help.
4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth;
In that very day his plans perish.

5 Happy *is he* who *has* the God of Jacob for his help,
Whose hope *is* in the Lord his God,
6 Who made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that *is* in them;
Who keeps truth forever,
7 Who executes justice for the oppressed,
Who gives food to the hungry.
The Lord gives freedom to the prisoners.

8 The Lord opens *the eyes of* the blind;
The Lord raises those who are bowed down;
The Lord loves the righteous.
9 The Lord watches over the strangers;
He relieves the fatherless and widow;
But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.

10 The Lord shall reign forever—
Your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.
PSALM 147:1

Psalm 147

Praise to God for His Word and Providence

Praise the Lord!
For *it is* good to sing praises to our God;
For *it is* pleasant, *and* praise is beautiful.

2 The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.
3 He heals the brokenhearted
And binds up their wounds.
4 He counts the number of the stars;
He calls them all by name.
5 Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in power;
His understanding *is* infinite.
6 The Lord lifts up the humble;
He casts the wicked down to the ground.

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praises on the harp to our God.
PSALM 147:7

7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
Sing praises on the harp to our God,
8 Who covers the heavens with clouds,
Who prepares rain for the earth,
Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.
9 He gives to the beast its food,
And to the young ravens that cry.

10 He does not delight in the strength of the horse;
He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.
11 The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him,
In those who hope in His mercy.

12 Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!

13 For He has strengthened the bars of your gates;
He has blessed your children within you.
14 He makes peace *in* your borders,
And fills you with the finest wheat.

15 He sends out His command *to the* earth;
His word runs very swiftly.
16 He gives snow like wool;
He scatters the frost like ashes;
17 He casts out His hail like morsels;
Who can stand before His cold?
18 He sends out His word and melts them;
He causes His wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.

19 He declares His word to Jacob,
His statutes and His judgments to Israel.
20 He has not dealt thus with any nation;
And *as for His* judgments, they have not known them.

Praise the LORD!

Psalm 148

Praise to the LORD from Creation

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;
Praise Him in the heights!
2 Praise Him, all His angels;
Praise Him, all His hosts!
3 Praise Him, sun and moon;
Praise Him, all you stars of light!
4 Praise Him, you heavens of heavens,
And you waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For He commanded and they were created.
6 He also established them forever and ever;
He made a decree which shall not pass away.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
You great sea creatures and all the depths;
8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds;
Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;
9 Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars;
10 Beasts and all cattle;
Creeping things and flying fowl;
11 Kings of the earth and all peoples;
Princes and all judges of the earth;
12 Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children.

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For His name alone is exalted;
His glory *is* above the earth and heaven.
14 And He has exalted the horn of His people,
The praise of all His saints—
Of the children of Israel,
A people near to Him.

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints.
PSALM 149:1

Psalm 149

Praise to God for His Salvation and Judgment

Praise the LORD!

Sing to the LORD a new song,
And His praise in the assembly of saints.

Let them praise His name with the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.
PSALM 149:3

2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
3 Let them praise His name with the dance;
Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.
4 For the LORD takes pleasure in His people;
He will beautify the humble with salvation.

5 Let the saints be joyful in glory;
Let them sing aloud on their beds.
6 *Let* the high praises of God *be* in
their mouth,
And a two-edged sword in their
hand,

Let the saints be joyful in glory;
let them sing aloud on their beds.
PSALM 149:5

7 To execute vengeance on the
nations,
And punishments on the peoples;
8 To bind their kings with chains,
And their nobles with fetters
of iron;
9 To execute on them the written
judgment—
This honor have all His saints.

Praise the LORD!

Psalm 150

Let All Things Praise the LORD

Praise the LORD!

Praise God in His sanctuary;
Praise Him in His mighty firmament!

2 Praise Him for His mighty acts;
Praise Him according to His excellent
greatness!

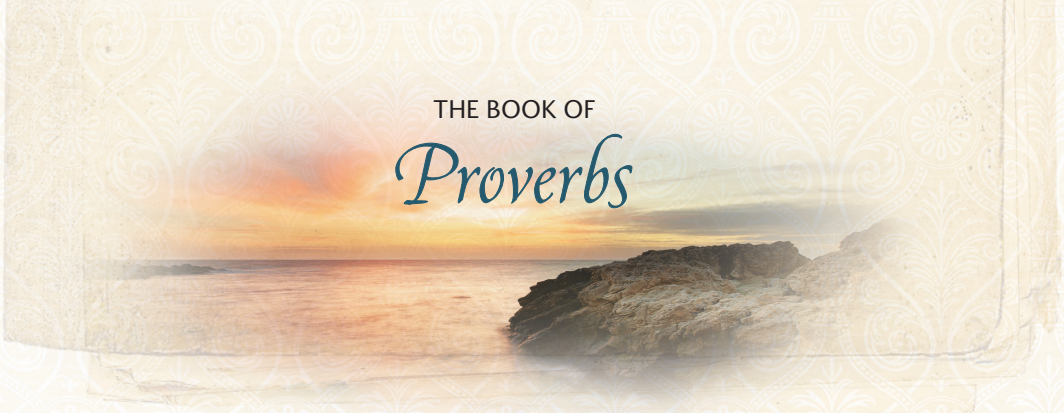
3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;
Praise Him with the lute and harp!
4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;
Praise Him with stringed instruments
and flutes!
5 Praise Him with loud cymbals;
Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

6 Let everything that has breath praise
the LORD.

Praise the LORD!

THE BOOK OF

Proverbs



The Beginning of Knowledge

1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of
David, king of Israel:

2 To know wisdom and instruction,
To perceive the words of understanding,
3 To receive the instruction of wisdom,
Justice, judgment, and equity;
4 To give prudence to the simple,
To the young man knowledge and
discretion—
5 A wise *man* will hear and increase
learning,
And a man of understanding will attain
wise counsel,
6 To understand a proverb and an enigma,
The words of the wise and their riddles.

7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning
of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and
instruction.

Shun Evil Counsel

8 My son, hear the instruction of your
father,
And do not forsake the law of your
mother;
9 For they *will be* a graceful ornament on
your head,
And chains about your neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent.
11 If they say, "Come with us,
Let us lie in wait to *shed* blood;
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent
without cause;
12 Let us swallow them alive like Sheol,[a]
And whole, like those who go down to
the Pit;
13 We shall find all *kinds* of precious
possessions,
We shall fill our houses with spoil;
14 Cast in your lot among us,
Let us all have one purse"—
15 My son, do not walk in the way with
them,
Keep your foot from their path;
16 For their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed blood.
17 Surely, in vain the net is spread
In the sight of any bird;
18 But they lie in wait for their *own* blood,
They lurk secretly for their *own* lives.
19 So *are* the ways of everyone who is
greedy for gain;
It takes away the life of its owners.

The Call of Wisdom

20 Wisdom calls aloud outside;
She raises her voice in the open squares.
21 She cries out in the chief concourses,[a]
At the openings of the gates in the city
She speaks her words:
22 "How long, you simple ones, will you
love simplicity?
For scorners delight in their scorning,
And fools hate knowledge.
23 Turn at my rebuke;
Surely I will pour out my spirit on you;
I will make my words known to you.
24 Because I have called and you refused,
I have stretched out my hand and no
one regarded,
25 Because you disdained all my counsel,
And would have none of my rebuke,
26 I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your terror comes,
27 When your terror comes like a storm,
And your destruction comes like a
whirlwind,
When distress and anguish come
upon you.

1:12 [a]Or *the grave* **1:21** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *top of the walls;* Vulgate reads *the head of multitudes.*

Happy is the man who finds wisdom,
and the man who gains understanding . . .
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.
PROVERBS 3:13, 17

Throughout Proverbs (the book of wisdom), the name "Jesus" may be substituted for the word "wisdom." I love that because seeking to get wise, seeking to understand, seeking and trying to be happy, are infinitely disappointing efforts. They always fail sooner or later. But how simple to seek Jesus. Love Jesus. Embrace Jesus. Learn of Jesus. In doing that, without straining and wearing ourselves out trying to be something impossible, we become all those things and don't even know it's happening until someone tells us, "My, how wise you are!" or "You bring such joy to my life." Or maybe, "It is so refreshing to be around you; you are so easy, so peaceful." We will be amazed! This should not come as such a surprise. God is love, and love is all those other things. If we have Christ, we have it all.



28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.
29 Because they hated knowledge
And did not choose the fear of the LORD,
30 They would have none of my counsel
And despised my every rebuke.
31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.
32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them,
And the complacency of fools will destroy them;
33 But whoever listens to me will dwell safely,
And will be secure, without fear of evil."

The Value of Wisdom

2 My son, if you receive my words,
And treasure my commands within you,
2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom,
And apply your heart to understanding;
3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment,
And lift up your voice for understanding,
4 If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as *for* hidden treasures;
5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,
And find the knowledge of God.
6 For the LORD gives wisdom;
From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding;
7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;
8 He guards the paths of justice,
And preserves the way of His saints.
9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice,
Equity *and* every good path.

10 When wisdom enters your heart,
And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,
11 Discretion will preserve you;
Understanding will keep you,
12 To deliver you from the way of evil,
From the man who speaks perverse things,

13 From those who leave the paths of uprightness
To walk in the ways of darkness;
14 Who rejoice in doing evil,
And delight in the perversity of the wicked;
15 Whose ways *are* crooked,
And *who are* devious in their paths;
16 To deliver you from the immoral woman,
From the seductress *who* flatters with her words,
17 Who forsakes the companion of her youth,
And forgets the covenant of her God.
18 For her house leads down to death,
And her paths to the dead;
19 None who go to her return,
Nor do they regain the paths of life—
20 So you may walk in the way of goodness,
And keep *to* the paths of righteousness.
21 For the upright will dwell in the land,
And the blameless will remain in it;
22 But the wicked will be cut off from the earth,
And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.

Guidance for the Young

3 My son, do not forget my law,
But let your heart keep my commands;
2 For length of days and long life
And peace they will add to you.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you;
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the tablet of your heart,
4 *And* so find favor and high esteem
In the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct[a] your paths.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the LORD and depart from evil.
8 It will be health to your flesh,[a]
And strength[b] to your bones.

9 Honor the LORD with your possessions,
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;
10 So your barns will be filled with plenty,
And your vats will overflow with new wine.

11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor detest His correction;
12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects,
Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights.

13 Happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom,
And the man *who* gains understanding;
14 For her proceeds *are* better than the profits of silver,
And her gain than fine gold.
15 She *is* more precious than rubies,
And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.
16 Length of days *is* in her right hand,
In her left hand riches and honor.
17 Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths *are* peace.
18 She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her,
And happy *are all* who retain her.

19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;
By understanding He established the heavens;
20 By His knowledge the depths were broken up,
And clouds drop down the dew.

21 My son, let them not depart from your eyes—
Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
22 So they will be life to your soul
And grace to your neck.
23 Then you will walk safely in your way,
And your foot will not stumble.
24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.
25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror,
Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;
26 For the LORD will be your confidence,
And will keep your foot from being caught.

3:6 [a]Or *make smooth* or *straight* **3:8** [a]Literally *navel*, figurative of the body [b]Literally *drink* or *refreshment*

27 Do not withhold good from those to
whom it is due,
When it is in the power of your hand
to do *so*.
28 Do not say to your neighbor,
"Go, and come back,
And tomorrow I will give *it*,"
When you have it with you.
29 Do not devise evil against your
neighbor,
For he dwells by you for safety's sake.
30 Do not strive with a man without cause,
If he has done you no harm.
31 Do not envy the oppressor,
And choose none of his ways;
32 For the perverse *person is* an
abomination to the LORD,
But His secret counsel *is* with the
upright.
33 The curse of the LORD *is* on the house
of the wicked,
But He blesses the home of the just.
34 Surely He scorns the scornful,
But gives grace to the humble.
35 The wise shall inherit glory,
But shame shall be the legacy of fools.



JEFF HAWES • Homecoming Artist, *Karen Peck and New River*

In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. | PROVERBS 3:6

As a young boy memorizing Bible verses in Sunday school, I never knew how instrumental this verse would be in leading me to the ministry I serve in today. Saved at seven years old, I always dreamed of singing—some way, somehow. I can remember coming home from church, going in my bedroom, and conducting my own version of a Gaither Homecoming, complete with song and testimony. Throughout my teen years, the circumstances never seemed to be right for me to be able to sing professionally, but all the while, God was leading me in the paths He would have me take.
I needed to learn how to love people and how to be a servant.

As college approached, still God had not opened a door for me to travel and sing, and I desperately needed to decide on a major. I prayed and prayed, and all the while this childhood memory verse kept flashing before me. I just had to trust that God was leading me in the right direction. I majored in English education, a subject that had always been special to me, and I could not wait to teach English to young people. Teaching school was exactly where I needed to be to learn both love and servitude. As I graduated and began teaching English, God opened the door. Finally, I had to lean not on my own understanding, but His. He allowed me to sing with Karen Peck and New River. What a dream come true! I had never sung professionally before, but I knew He would direct me in every decision. I am a true testament that God can do amazing works in you if you will just acknowledge that He is in control of your life and have faith that He will direct your every step.

Security in Wisdom

4 Hear, *my* children, the instruction
of a father,
And give attention to know
understanding;
2 For I give you good doctrine:
Do not forsake my law.
3 When I was my father's son,
Tender and the only one in the sight
of my mother,
4 He also taught me, and said to me:
"Let your heart retain my words;
Keep my commands, and live.
5 Get wisdom! Get understanding!
Do not forget, nor turn away from the
words of my mouth.
6 Do not forsake her, and she will
preserve you;
Love her, and she will keep you.
7 Wisdom *is* the principal thing;
Therefore get wisdom.
And in all your getting, get
understanding.
8 Exalt her, and she will promote you;
She will bring you honor, when you
embrace her.
9 She will place on your head an
ornament of grace;
A crown of glory she will deliver to you."

10 Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,
And the years of your life will be many.
11 I have taught you in the way of
wisdom;
I have led you in right paths.
12 When you walk, your steps will not be
hindered,
And when you run, you will not stumble.
13 Take firm hold of instruction, do not
let go;
Keep her, for she *is* your life.

14 Do not enter the path of the wicked,
And do not walk in the way of evil.
15 Avoid it, do not travel on it;
Turn away from it and pass on.
16 For they do not sleep unless they have
done evil;
And their sleep is taken away unless
they make *someone* fall.
17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
And drink the wine of violence.
18 But the path of the just *is* like the
shining sun,[a]
That shines ever brighter unto the
perfect day.
19 The way of the wicked *is* like darkness;
They do not know what makes them
stumble.

20 My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.
21 Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart;
22 For they *are* life to those who find
them,
And health to all their flesh.
23 Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it *spring* the issues of life.
24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips far from you.
25 Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right before you.
26 Ponder the path of your feet,
And let all your ways be established.
27 Do not turn to the right or the left;
Remove your foot from evil.

The Peril of Adultery

5 My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
Lend your ear to my understanding,
2 That you may preserve discretion,
And your lips may keep knowledge.
3 For the lips of an immoral woman
drip honey,
And her mouth *is* smoother than oil;
4 But in the end she is bitter as
wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death,
Her steps lay hold of hell.[a]
6 Lest you ponder *her* path of life—
Her ways are unstable;
You do not know *them.*

7 Therefore hear me now, *my* children,
And do not depart from the words of
my mouth.
8 Remove your way far from her,
And do not go near the door of her
house,
9 Lest you give your honor to others,
And your years to the cruel *one;*
10 Lest aliens be filled with your wealth,

4:18 [a]Literally *light* **5:5** [a]Or *Sheol*

Keep your heart with all diligence,
for out of it spring the issues of life.
PROVERBS 4:23

Integrity is a character trait won mostly in the heat of life. I used to think making good choices was solely a mind activity. I tend to approach most of life's dilemmas head first. As I get older and as life shapes and shifts my pathway, I am learning that my most important choices need to be addressed first from my heart.

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." Our heart is the place where our mind and soul meet. Through our hearts, God speaks to us and leads us into the best He has for us. Our God is the initiator of any good in us. God's love is a wellspring of goodness. When our hearts are attuned to God's heart, priorities start to line up, attitudes become more loving, and our needed actions take on greater clarity.

If we are open, God can do this miracle of heart shaping, even in the midst of our greatest failures. Doing the right thing is not always the most popular choice. It may require the greatest soul searching we have ever experienced. The habit of doing the right thing allows God to mold us into people who live and walk with Him, heart first. "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

Walk the way of the heart.

And your labors *go* to the house of
a foreigner;
11 And you mourn at last,
When your flesh and your body are
consumed,
12 And say:
"How I have hated instruction,
And my heart despised correction!
13 I have not obeyed the voice of my
teachers,
Nor inclined my ear to those who
instructed me!
14 I was on the verge of total ruin,
In the midst of the assembly and
congregation."

15 Drink water from your own cistern,
And running water from your own well.
16 Should your fountains be dispersed
abroad,
Streams of water in the streets?
17 Let them be only your own,
And not for strangers with you.
18 Let your fountain be blessed,
And rejoice with the wife of your youth.
19 *As a* loving deer and a graceful doe,
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;
And always be enraptured with her love.
20 For why should you, my son, be
enraptured by an immoral woman,
And be embraced in the arms of a
seductress?

21 For the ways of man *are* before the
eyes of the LORD,
And He ponders all his paths.
22 His own iniquities entrap the
wicked *man,*
And he is caught in the cords of his sin.
23 He shall die for lack of instruction,
And in the greatness of his folly he
shall go astray.

Dangerous Promises

6 My son, if you become surety for
your friend,
If you have shaken hands in pledge
for a stranger,
2 You are snared by the words of your
mouth;
You are taken by the words of your
mouth.
3 So do this, my son, and deliver yourself;

For you have come into the hand of
your friend:
Go and humble yourself;
Plead with your friend.
4 Give no sleep to your eyes,
Nor slumber to your eyelids.
5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from
the hand *of the hunter,*
And like a bird from the hand of the
fowler.[a]

The Folly of Indolence

6 Go to the ant, you sluggard!
Consider her ways and be wise,
7 Which, having no captain,
Overseer or ruler,
8 Provides her supplies in the summer,
And gathers her food in the harvest.
9 How long will you slumber, O
sluggard?
When will you rise from your sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep—
11 So shall your poverty come on you like
a prowler,
And your need like an armed man.

The Wicked Man

12 A worthless person, a wicked man,
Walks with a perverse mouth;
13 He winks with his eyes,
He shuffles his feet,
He points with his fingers;
14 Perversity *is* in his heart,
He devises evil continually,
He sows discord.
15 Therefore his calamity shall come
suddenly;
Suddenly he shall be broken without
remedy.

16 These six *things* the LORD hates,
Yes, seven *are* an abomination
to Him:
17 A proud look,
A lying tongue,
Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness *who* speaks lies,
And one who sows discord among
brethren.

Beware of Adultery

20 My son, keep your father's command,
And do not forsake the law of your
mother.
21 Bind them continually upon your heart;
Tie them around your neck.
22 When you roam, they[a] will lead you;
When you sleep, they will keep you;
And *when* you awake, they will speak
with you.
23 For the commandment *is* a lamp,
And the law a light;
Reproofs of instruction *are* the way
of life,
24 To keep you from the evil woman,
From the flattering tongue of a
seductress.
25 Do not lust after her beauty in
your heart,
Nor let her allure you with her eyelids.
26 For by means of a harlot
A man is reduced to a crust of bread;
And an adulteress[a] will prey upon his
precious life.
27 Can a man take fire to his bosom,
And his clothes not be burned?
28 Can one walk on hot coals,
And his feet not be seared?
29 So *is* he who goes in to his neighbor's
wife;
Whoever touches her shall not be
innocent.

30 *People* do not despise a thief
If he steals to satisfy himself when he
is starving.
31 Yet *when* he is found, he must restore
sevenfold;
He may have to give up all the
substance of his house.
32 Whoever commits adultery with a
woman lacks understanding;
He *who* does so destroys his own soul.
33 Wounds and dishonor he will get,
And his reproach will not be wiped away.
34 For jealousy *is* a husband's fury;
Therefore he will not spare in the day
of vengeance.
35 He will accept no recompense,
Nor will he be appeased though you
give many gifts.

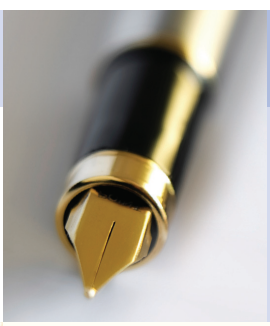
6:5 [a]That is, one who catches birds in a trap or snare **6:22** [a]Literally *it* **6:26** [a]Literally *a man's wife,* that is, of another

7 My son, keep my words,
And treasure my commands
within you.
2 Keep my commands and live,
And my law as the apple of your eye.
3 Bind them on your fingers;
Write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Say to wisdom, "You *are* my sister,"
And call understanding *your* nearest kin,
5 That they may keep you from the
immoral woman,
From the seductress *who* flatters with
her words.

The Crafty Harlot

6 For at the window of my house
I looked through my lattice,
7 And saw among the simple,
I perceived among the youths,
A young man devoid of understanding,
8 Passing along the street near her corner;
And he took the path to her house
9 In the twilight, in the evening,
In the black and dark night.

10 And there a woman met him,
With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty
heart.
11 She *was* loud and rebellious,
Her feet would not stay at home.
12 At times *she was* outside, at times in
the open square,
Lurking at every corner.
13 So she caught him and kissed him;
With an impudent face she said to him:
14 "*I have* peace offerings with me;
Today I have paid my vows.
15 So I came out to meet you,
Diligently to seek your face,
And I have found you.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. | PROVERBS 4:18

"May I write my thoughts to you from time to time?" asked an elderly brother in Christ. What a treasure of devotional meditations I received from Brother Grasty before he went home to be forever with the Lord. On August 4, 1982, I received a paper entitled: "The Lesser Lights." In this paper, this dear veteran of the faith wrote of his experiences of old age. "The lesser lights are growing dimmer," he said. "Sight, memory, hearing, the ability to walk and get around." Then he added this sentence, "As the lesser lights grow dim, the *greater light* is getting brighter and brighter." He was referring to the Lord Himself. He went on in the paper to say that if it weren't for the fact that the lesser lights were growing dim, he may not ever seek the Lord. If he remained at full strength, he wouldn't be longing for heaven. He was praising the Lord that the lesser lights were going out and Christ, the greater light, was growing brighter. Perhaps this is why the writer of Proverbs compared the path of the just to the rising sun rather than to the setting sun. The greater light shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

16 I have spread my bed with tapestry,
Colored coverings of Egyptian linen.
17 I have perfumed my bed
With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
18 Come, let us take our fill of love until
morning;
Let us delight ourselves with love.
19 For my husband *is* not at home;
He has gone on a long journey;
20 He has taken a bag of money with him,
And will come home on the
appointed day."

21 With her enticing speech she caused
him to yield,
With her flattering lips she seduced
him.
22 Immediately he went after her, as an ox
goes to the slaughter,
Or as a fool to the correction of the
stocks,[a]
23 Till an arrow struck his liver.
As a bird hastens to the snare,
He did not know it *would cost* his life.

24 Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children;
Pay attention to the words of my mouth:
25 Do not let your heart turn aside to
her ways,
Do not stray into her paths;
26 For she has cast down many wounded,
And all who were slain by her were
strong *men.*
27 Her house *is* the way to hell,[a]
Descending to the chambers of death.

The Excellence of Wisdom

8 Does not wisdom cry out,
And understanding lift up her voice?
2 She takes her stand on the top of the
high hill,
Beside the way, where the paths meet.
3 She cries out by the gates, at the entry
of the city,
At the entrance of the doors:
4 "To you, O men, I call,
And my voice *is* to the sons of men.
5 O you simple ones, understand
prudence,
And you fools, be of an understanding
heart.
6 Listen, for I will speak of excellent
things,
And from the opening of my lips *will*
come right things;
7 For my mouth will speak truth;
Wickedness *is* an abomination to my
lips.
8 All the words of my mouth *are* with
righteousness;
Nothing crooked or perverse *is* in
them.
9 They *are* all plain to him who
understands,
And right to those who find
knowledge.
10 Receive my instruction, and not silver,
And knowledge rather than choice
gold;
11 For wisdom *is* better than rubies,
And all the things one may desire
cannot be compared with her.

12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,
And find out knowledge *and* discretion.
13 The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil;
Pride and arrogance and the evil way
And the perverse mouth I hate.
14 Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom;
I *am* understanding, I have strength.
15 By me kings reign,
And rulers decree justice.
16 By me princes rule, and nobles,
All the judges of the earth.[a]
17 I love those who love me,
And those who seek me diligently will
find me.
18 Riches and honor *are* with me,
Enduring riches and righteousness.
19 My fruit *is* better than gold, yes, than
fine gold,
And my revenue than choice silver.
20 I traverse the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of justice,
21 That I may cause those who love me to
inherit wealth,
That I may fill their treasuries.

22 "The LORD possessed me at the
beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
23 I have been established from
everlasting,

7:22 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *as a dog to bonds;* Vulgate reads *as a lamb . . . to bonds.* **7:27** [a]Or *Sheol* **8:16** [a]Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *righteousness;* Septuagint, Bomberg, and some manuscripts and editions read *earth.*

When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life.
PROVERBS 6:22, 23

Homing devices are not new and were not just invented by the Navy and Air Force. God has been using a homing device for centuries and gives one to every believer. The homing device of our lives is His own Word—written and spoken, the Word we hide in our hearts and the witness of the Spirit that continues to sound off on a daily basis as we make our way through the land mines or sea mines and enemy fire (see Ps. 119:11; Rom. 8:16).

His Word and the Spirit are totally trustworthy to keep us safely on the path. When we are awake, God speaks to our conscious minds, giving direction and warning. When we sleep, He directs the unconscious mind with images and revelations that the Word confirms when we awaken. He *will* lead us. Relax, my soul, in this.



From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.
24 When *there were* no depths I was brought forth,
When *there were* no fountains abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills, I was brought forth;
26 While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields,
Or the primal dust of the world.
27 When He prepared the heavens, I *was* there,
When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 When He established the clouds above,
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,
29 When He assigned to the sea its limit,
So that the waters would not transgress His command,
When He marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 Then I was beside Him *as* a master craftsman;[a]
And I was daily *His* delight,
Rejoicing always before Him,
31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world,
And my delight *was* with the sons of men.

32 "Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children,
For blessed *are those who* keep my ways.
33 Hear instruction and be wise,
And do not disdain *it*.
34 Blessed is the man who listens to me,
Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors.
35 For whoever finds me finds life,
And obtains favor from the LORD;
36 But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul;
All those who hate me love death."

The Way of Wisdom

9 Wisdom has built her house,
She has hewn out her seven pillars;
2 She has slaughtered her meat,
She has mixed her wine,
She has also furnished her table.

8:30 [a]A Jewish tradition reads *one brought up*.

3 She has sent out her maidens,
She cries out from the highest places
of the city,
4 "Whoever *is* simple, let him turn
in here!"
As for him who lacks understanding,
she says to him,
5 "Come, eat of my bread
And drink of the wine I have mixed.
6 Forsake foolishness and live,
And go in the way of understanding.

7 "He who corrects a scoffer gets shame
for himself,
And he who rebukes a wicked *man only*
harms himself.
8 Do not correct a scoffer, lest he
hate you;
Rebuke a wise *man,* and he will
love you.
9 Give *instruction* to a wise *man,* and he
will be still wiser;
Teach a just *man,* and he will increase
in learning.

10 "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning
of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One *is*
understanding.
11 For by me your days will be multiplied,
And years of life will be added to you.
12 If you are wise, you are wise for
yourself,
And *if* you scoff, you will bear *it* alone."

The Way of Folly

13 A foolish woman is clamorous;
She is simple, and knows nothing.
14 For she sits at the door of her house,
On a seat *by* the highest places of
the city,
15 To call to those who pass by,
Who go straight on their way:
16 "Whoever *is* simple, let him turn
in here";
And *as for* him who lacks
understanding, she says to him,
17 "Stolen water is sweet,
And bread *eaten* in secret is pleasant."
18 But he does not know that the dead
are there,
That her guests *are* in the depths of hell.[a]

Wise Sayings of Solomon

10 The proverbs of Solomon:

A wise son makes a glad father,
But a foolish son *is* the grief of his
mother.

2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing,
But righteousness delivers from death.
3 The LORD will not allow the righteous
soul to famish,
But He casts away the desire of the
wicked.

4 He who has a slack hand becomes
poor,
But the hand of the diligent makes
rich.
5 He who gathers in summer *is* a wise
son;
He who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who
causes shame.

6 Blessings *are* on the head of the
righteous,
But violence covers the mouth of the
wicked.
7 The memory of the righteous *is*
blessed,
But the name of the wicked will rot.

8 The wise in heart will receive
commands,
But a prating fool will fall.
9 He who walks with integrity walks
securely,
But he who perverts his ways will
become known.

10 He who winks with the eye causes
trouble,
But a prating fool will fall.

11 The mouth of the righteous *is* a well of
life,
But violence covers the mouth of the
wicked.

12 Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all sins.

13 Wisdom is found on the lips of him
who has understanding,

9:18 [a]Or *Sheol*

But a rod *is* for the back of him who is
devoid of understanding.

14 Wise *people* store up knowledge,
But the mouth of the foolish *is* near
destruction.

15 The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city;
The destruction of the poor *is* their
poverty.

16 The labor of the righteous *leads* to life,
The wages of the wicked to sin.

17 He who keeps instruction *is in* the
way of life,
But he who refuses correction goes
astray.

18 Whoever hides hatred *has* lying lips,
And whoever spreads slander *is* a fool.

19 In the multitude of words sin is not
lacking,
But he who restrains his lips *is* wise.
20 The tongue of the righteous *is* choice
silver;
The heart of the wicked *is worth* little.
21 The lips of the righteous feed many,
But fools die for lack of wisdom.[a]

22 The blessing of the LORD makes *one*
rich,
And He adds no sorrow with it.

23 To do evil *is* like sport to a fool,
But a man of understanding has
wisdom.
24 The fear of the wicked will come
upon him,
And the desire of the righteous will
be granted.
25 When the whirlwind passes by, the
wicked *is* no *more,*
But the righteous *has* an everlasting
foundation.

26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke
to the eyes,
So *is* the lazy *man* to those who
send him.

10:21 [a]Literally *heart*



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Does not wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice? She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, beside the way, where the paths meet. She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, at the entrance of the doors: "To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." | PROVERBS 8:1–4

Wisdom, in the form of the Spirit of God, does seek us out, even children, wherever we may be. I've been watching for a long time now to see if this is true, and I'm convinced that it is.

Somewhere between two and four, I encountered this Spirit of wisdom. I was a little mountain girl, living in a remote log cabin in the Rocky Mountains with wonderful, gentle parents and a grand older brother. There were no churches, no Sunday schools, no phonograph records. I even remember when our first radio came in the mail. There was no talk of God that I can recall. This is not to discredit my family—I just wasn't aware of any talk if it was there.

27 The fear of the LORD prolongs days,
But the years of the wicked will be shortened.
28 The hope of the righteous *will be* gladness,
But the expectation of the wicked will perish.
29 The way of the LORD *is* strength for the upright,
But destruction *will come* to the workers of iniquity.

30 The righteous will never be removed,
But the wicked will not inhabit the earth.
31 The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
But the perverse tongue will be cut out.
32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable,
But the mouth of the wicked *what is* perverse.

11 Dishonest scales *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But a just weight *is* His delight.

2 When pride comes, then comes shame;
But with the humble *is* wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright will guide them,
But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.
4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,
But righteousness delivers from death.
5 The righteousness of the blameless will direct[a] his way aright,
But the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.
6 The righteousness of the upright will deliver them,
But the unfaithful will be caught by *their* lust.

7 When a wicked man dies, *his* expectation will perish,
And the hope of the unjust perishes.
8 The righteous is delivered from trouble,
And it comes to the wicked instead.
9 The hypocrite with *his* mouth destroys his neighbor,

11:5 [a]Or *make smooth* or *straight*

Sitting in the old rope swing one day, kicking dry dust with tan bare feet, I watched the white fleecy clouds float across the blue sky and got lost in my imagination. There was "Someone wonderful up there"—I just knew it! And He loved me! I sent back a soundless message that I loved Him, too.

This ethereal experience, even though childish, was dramatic and made a lifetime impression on me. I hinge the whole bent of my life's longings on that one moment. Henceforth I wanted to be good and in tune with that wonderful Spirit Person.

As a mother, I also watched my own little girls, usually around age four, experience some "moment of truth," some encounter with that beautiful Spirit of wisdom. And they all responded positively. This is not to say they were saved. They were *bent,* or called or chosen. God did not leave them untouched as children. I thank Him that He reaches and touches and pulls, even in the streets where His name is not heard. If we learn to encourage when we see He has left His mark on a heart, we'll be workers with Him.

But through knowledge the righteous
will be delivered.
10 When it goes well with the righteous,
the city rejoices;
And when the wicked perish, *there is*
jubilation.
11 By the blessing of the upright the city
is exalted,
But it is overthrown by the mouth of
the wicked.

12 He who is devoid of wisdom despises
his neighbor,
But a man of understanding holds
his peace.

13 A talebearer reveals secrets,
But he who is of a faithful spirit
conceals a matter.

14 Where *there is* no counsel, the
people fall;
But in the multitude of counselors
there is safety.

15 He who is surety for a stranger
will suffer,
But one who hates being surety is secure.

16 A gracious woman retains honor,
But ruthless *men* retain riches.
17 The merciful man does good for his
own soul,
But *he who is* cruel troubles his own flesh.
18 The wicked *man* does deceptive work,
But he who sows righteousness *will*
have a sure reward.
19 As righteousness *leads* to life,
So he who pursues evil *pursues it* to his
own death.
20 Those who are of a perverse heart *are*
an abomination to the LORD,
But *the* blameless in their ways *are* His
delight.
21 *Though they join* forces,[a] the wicked will
not go unpunished;
But the posterity of the righteous will
be delivered.

22 *As* a ring of gold in a swine's snout,
So is a lovely woman who lacks
discretion.

23 The desire of the righteous *is* only good,
But the expectation of the wicked *is*
wrath.

11:21 [a]Literally *hand to hand*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

To do evil is like sport to a fool, but a man of understanding has wisdom. | PROVERBS 10:23

Some people like to golf; others enjoy bowling. Some are only spectators and enjoy baseball or football. Some like summer sports while others like winter sports. God says that to the foolish, it is like a sport to sin. I know many whose favorite sport is sinning against the Lord. I have never heard a Christian give the answer from this passage to the question, "What is your favorite sport?" Wouldn't it be refreshing to hear someone say, "Wisdom is my favorite sport"? I do not consider myself to be very athletic; my interest in sports is minimal, but here is a sport I would like to perfect. Growing wise should be as exciting as any involvement in any other sport.

24 There is *one* who scatters, yet increases more;
And there is *one* who withholds more than is right,
But it *leads* to poverty.
25 The generous soul will be made rich,
And he who waters will also be watered himself.
26 The people will curse him who withholds grain,
But blessing *will be* on the head of him who sells *it*.

27 He who earnestly seeks good finds favor,
But trouble will come to him who seeks *evil*.

28 He who trusts in his riches will fall,
But the righteous will flourish like foliage.

29 He who troubles his own house will inherit the wind,
And the fool *will be* servant to the wise of heart.

30 The fruit of the righteous *is a* tree of life,
And he who wins souls *is* wise.

31 If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth,
How much more the ungodly and the sinner.

12 Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge,
But he who hates correction *is* stupid.

2 A good *man* obtains favor from the LORD,
But a man of wicked intentions He will condemn.

3 A man is not established by wickedness,
But the root of the righteous cannot be moved.

4 An excellent[a] wife *is* the crown of her husband,
But she who causes shame *is* like rottenness in his bones.

5 The thoughts of the righteous *are* right,
But the counsels of the wicked *are* deceitful.

6 The words of the wicked *are,* "Lie in wait for blood,"
But the mouth of the upright will deliver them.

7 The wicked are overthrown and *are* no more,
But the house of the righteous will stand.

8 A man will be commended according to his wisdom,
But he who is of a perverse heart will be despised.

9 Better *is the one* who is slighted but has a servant,
Than he who honors himself but lacks bread.

10 A righteous *man* regards the life of his animal,
But the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel.

11 He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread,
But he who follows frivolity *is* devoid of understanding.[a]

12 The wicked covet the catch of evil *men,*
But the root of the righteous yields *fruit.*
13 The wicked is ensnared by the transgression of *his* lips,
But the righteous will come through trouble.
14 A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of *his* mouth,
And the recompense of a man's hands will be rendered to him.

15 The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes,
But he who heeds counsel *is* wise.
16 A fool's wrath is known at once,
But a prudent *man* covers shame.

17 He *who* speaks truth declares righteousness,
But a false witness, deceit.
18 There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword,
But the tongue of the wise *promotes* health.

12:4 [a]Literally *A wife of valor* **12:11** [a]Literally *heart*

19 The truthful lip shall be established forever,
But a lying tongue *is* but for a moment.
20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil,
But counselors of peace have joy.
21 No grave trouble will overtake the righteous,
But the wicked shall be filled with evil.
22 Lying lips *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But those who deal truthfully *are* His delight.

23 A prudent man conceals knowledge,
But the heart of fools proclaims foolishness.

24 The hand of the diligent will rule,
But the lazy *man* will be put to forced labor.

25 Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression,
But a good word makes it glad.

26 The righteous should choose his friends carefully,
For the way of the wicked leads them astray.

27 The lazy *man* does not roast what he took in hunting,
But diligence *is* man's precious possession.

28 In the way of righteousness *is* life,
And in *its* pathway *there is* no death.



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself. | PROVERBS 11:24, 25

This is a little spiritual principle that is easy and second nature for some Christians and extremely gritty for others.

For Polly, my mother-in-law, it was extremely easy. She was naturally generous to a fault. She was also a wonderful cook. As a pastor's wife, through the years she cooked and served thousands of scrumptious meals. She collected recipes from ladies all over the world. Being a neat and tidy person, she copied all of them carefully and filed them logically. This was no small accomplishment. My recipe box and many others I've seen look like scrambled eggs in a metal box. As a special wedding gift for our second daughter, Karen, Polly laboriously copied all her special recipes and gave them to her.

In a year or so Polly and PaPa Dale made a move, and her own recipe box was never seen again. It was packed in a box with some valuable things, left in the station wagon, and they assume the whole box was stolen. She loudly lamented the loss of a lifetime of collected recipes. It was some time before any of us remembered that, indeed they were not all lost, for Karen had a copy of all the *very best*. So, you see, she saved only the ones she gave away!

13 A wise son *heeds* his father's
instruction,
But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

2 A man shall eat well by the fruit of *his*
mouth,
But the soul of the unfaithful feeds on
violence.
3 He who guards his mouth preserves
his life,
But he who opens wide his lips shall
have destruction.

4 The soul of a lazy *man* desires, and *has*
nothing;
But the soul of the diligent shall be
made rich.

5 A righteous *man* hates lying,
But a wicked *man* is loathsome and
comes to shame.
6 Righteousness guards *him whose* way is
blameless,
But wickedness overthrows the sinner.

7 There is one who makes himself rich,
yet *has* nothing;
And one who makes himself poor, yet
has great riches.

8 The ransom of a man's life *is* his
riches,
But the poor does not hear rebuke.

9 The light of the righteous rejoices,
But the lamp of the wicked will be
put out.

10 By pride comes nothing but strife,
But with the well-advised *is* wisdom.

11 Wealth *gained by* dishonesty will be
diminished,
But he who gathers by labor will
increase.

12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
But *when* the desire comes, *it is* a tree
of life.

13 He who despises the word will be
destroyed,
But he who fears the commandment
will be rewarded.
14 The law of the wise *is* a fountain of life,
To turn *one* away from the snares of
death.

15 Good understanding gains favor,
But the way of the unfaithful *is* hard.
16 Every prudent *man* acts with
knowledge,
But a fool lays open *his* folly.

17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
But a faithful ambassador *brings* health.

18 Poverty and shame *will come* to him
who disdains correction,
But he who regards a rebuke will be
honored.

19 A desire accomplished is sweet to the
soul,
But *it is* an abomination to fools to
depart from evil.

20 He who walks with wise *men* will be
wise,
But the companion of fools will be
destroyed.

21 Evil pursues sinners,
But to the righteous, good shall be
repaid.

22 A good *man* leaves an inheritance to
his children's children,
But the wealth of the sinner is stored
up for the righteous.

23 Much food *is in* the fallow *ground* of
the poor,
And for lack of justice there is waste.[a]

24 He who spares his rod hates his son,
But he who loves him disciplines him
promptly.

25 The righteous eats to the satisfying of
his soul,
But the stomach of the wicked shall be
in want.
14 The wise woman builds her house,
But the foolish pulls it down with
her hands.

2 He who walks in his uprightness fears
the LORD,

13:23 [a]Literally *what is swept away*

But *he who is* perverse in his ways
despises Him.

3 In the mouth of a fool *is* a rod of pride,
But the lips of the wise will preserve them.

4 Where no oxen *are,* the trough *is* clean;
But much increase *comes* by the strength of an ox.

5 A faithful witness does not lie,
But a false witness will utter lies.

6 A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not *find it,*
But knowledge *is* easy to him who understands.
7 Go from the presence of a foolish man,
When you do not perceive *in him* the lips of knowledge.
8 The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way,
But the folly of fools *is* deceit.

9 Fools mock at sin,
But among the upright *there is* favor.

10 The heart knows its own bitterness,
And a stranger does not share its joy.

11 The house of the wicked will be overthrown,
But the tent of the upright will flourish.

12 There is a way *that seems* right to a man,
But its end *is* the way of death.

13 Even in laughter the heart may sorrow,
And the end of mirth *may be* grief.

14 The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways,
But a good man *will be satisfied* from above.[a]

15 The simple believes every word,
But the prudent considers well his steps.
16 A wise *man* fears and departs from evil,
But a fool rages and is self-confident.
17 A quick-tempered *man* acts foolishly,
And a man of wicked intentions is hated.
18 The simple inherit folly,
But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
19 The evil will bow before the good,
And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

14:14 [a]Literally *from above himself*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is man's precious possession. | PROVERBS 12:27

I enjoy digging in the Scriptures and finding treasure. I love research; I love to do the donkey work and search out a truth. I love hunting for the heart of God in the redemptive history of the Bible. I was very much convicted as I read this passage. It is one thing to hunt for sport; it is another thing to hunt for food. Was I actually consuming what I took in the hunt? Am I just trophy hunting, or do I hunt in order to provide nourishment? It caused me to become as earnest about applying God's truth as I was to discover it. I do not hunt less, but now I eat more.

20 The poor *man* is hated even by his
own neighbor,
But the rich *has* many friends.
21 He who despises his neighbor sins;
But he who has mercy on the poor,
happy *is* he.

22 Do they not go astray who devise evil?
But mercy and truth *belong* to those
who devise good.

23 In all labor there is profit,
But idle chatter[a] *leads* only to poverty.

24 The crown of the wise is their riches,
But the foolishness of fools *is* folly.

25 A true witness delivers souls,
But a deceitful *witness* speaks lies.

26 In the fear of the LORD *there is* strong
confidence,
And His children will have a place of
refuge.
27 The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life,
To turn *one* away from the snares of
death.

28 In a multitude of people *is* a king's
honor,
But in the lack of people *is* the
downfall of a prince.

29 *He who is* slow to wrath has great
understanding,
But *he who is* impulsive[a] exalts folly.

30 A sound heart *is* life to the body,
But envy *is* rottenness to the bones.

31 He who oppresses the poor reproaches
his Maker,
But he who honors Him has mercy on
the needy.

32 The wicked is banished in his
wickedness,
But the righteous has a refuge in his
death.

33 Wisdom rests in the heart of him who
has understanding,
But *what is* in the heart of fools is
made known.

34 Righteousness exalts a nation,
But sin *is* a reproach to *any* people.

35 The king's favor *is* toward a wise servant,
But his wrath *is against* him who causes
shame.

15 A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.
2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge
rightly,
But the mouth of fools pours forth
foolishness.

3 The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place,
Keeping watch on the evil and the good.

4 A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life,
But perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

5 A fool despises his father's instruction,
But he who receives correction is
prudent.

6 *In* the house of the righteous *there is*
much treasure,
But in the revenue of the wicked is
trouble.

7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge,
But the heart of the fool *does* not *do* so.

8 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an
abomination to the LORD,
But the prayer of the upright *is* His
delight.
9 The way of the wicked *is* an
abomination to the LORD,
But He loves him who follows
righteousness.

10 Harsh discipline *is* for him who
forsakes the way,
And he who hates correction will die.

11 Hell[a] and Destruction[b] *are* before
the LORD;
So how much more the hearts of the
sons of men.

12 A scoffer does not love one who
corrects him,
Nor will he go to the wise.

14:23 [a]Literally *talk of the lips* **14:29** [a]Literally *short of spirit*
15:11 [a]Or *Sheol* [b]Hebrew *Abaddon*

13 A merry heart makes a cheerful
countenance,
But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is
broken.

14 The heart of him who has
understanding seeks knowledge,
But the mouth of fools feeds on
foolishness.

15 All the days of the afflicted *are* evil,
But he who is of a merry heart *has* a
continual feast.

16 Better *is* a little with the fear of the LORD,
Than great treasure with trouble.
17 Better *is* a dinner of herbs[a] where love is,
Than a fatted calf with hatred.

18 A wrathful man stirs up strife,
But *he who is* slow to anger allays
contention.

19 The way of the lazy *man is* like a hedge
of thorns,
But the way of the upright *is* a highway.

20 A wise son makes a father glad,
But a foolish man despises his mother.

15:17 [a]Or *vegetables*



KIM COLLINGSWORTH • Homecoming Artist, Pianist, *The Collingsworth Family*

A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD *directs his steps.* | PROVERBS 16:9

I'm a list maker! I have been for years trying to juggle the many different responsibilities I have as a homeschool mom, a concert artist on the weekends, and the many other duties that I, as a woman, carry out in our home on a daily basis. My lists have become my compass. I make a fresh list every morning and keep it close at hand, reminding me of what has to be accomplished for the day and the week ahead. In short, I have a plan, and I like things done according to the plan!

But what do you do when your schedule gets interrupted by circumstances out of your control? There was a day when losing control would really upset my little world. I would resist the change of plan and fight against it. (Sounds boring, I know!)

It was not until I came across this verse and God so graciously opened my eyes to this truth that I was able to admit that maybe this is a God-interruption in my day. When I finally learned to embrace the interruption instead of resisting it, then and only then was I able to say with a measure of calm, "OK, God, what do *You* want for my day? You obviously have different plans for me, and I'm OK with it!"

I still make lists most every day, and I usually stick pretty close to them, but I'm learning that the interruptions of my plans many times are God's way of directing my steps in the way He has chosen. At the end of the day, I rest in the fact that God's compass is sure and far more reliable than any list I'll ever make.

Do not have your concert first, and then tune your instrument afterwards. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all into harmony with Him.

HUDSON TAYLOR

21 Folly *is* joy *to him who is* destitute of discernment,
But a man of understanding walks uprightly.

22 Without counsel, plans go awry,
But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

23 A man has joy by the answer of his mouth,
And a word *spoken* in due season, how good *it is!*

24 The way of life *winds* upward for the wise,
That he may turn away from hell[a] below.

25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud,
But He will establish the boundary of the widow.

26 The thoughts of the wicked *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But the words of the pure *are* pleasant.

27 He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house,
But he who hates bribes will live.

28 The heart of the righteous studies how to answer,
But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.

29 The LORD *is* far from the wicked,
But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

30 The light of the eyes rejoices the heart,
And a good report makes the bones healthy.[a]

31 The ear that hears the rebukes of life
Will abide among the wise.

32 He who disdains instruction despises his own soul,
But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.

33 The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom,
And before honor *is* humility.

16 The preparations of the heart *belong* to man,
But the answer of the tongue *is* from the LORD.

2 All the ways of a man *are* pure in his own eyes,
But the LORD weighs the spirits.

3 Commit your works to the LORD,
And your thoughts will be established.

4 The LORD has made all for Himself,
Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.

5 Everyone proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD;
Though they join forces,[a] none will go unpunished.

6 In mercy and truth
Atonement is provided for iniquity;
And by the fear of the LORD *one* departs from evil.

7 When a man's ways please the LORD,
He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

8 Better *is* a little with righteousness,
Than vast revenues without justice.

9 A man's heart plans his way,
But the LORD directs his steps.

10 Divination *is* on the lips of the king;
His mouth must not transgress in judgment.

11 Honest weights and scales *are* the LORD's;
All the weights in the bag *are* His work.

12 *It is* an abomination for kings to commit wickedness,
For a throne is established by righteousness.

15:24 [a]Or *Sheol* **15:30** [a]Literally *fat* **16:5** [a]Literally *hand to hand*

13 Righteous lips *are* the delight of kings,
And they love him who speaks *what is*
right.
14 As messengers of death *is* the king's
wrath,
But a wise man will appease it.
15 In the light of the king's face *is* life,
And his favor *is* like a cloud of the
latter rain.

16 How much better to get wisdom
than gold!
And to get understanding is to be
chosen rather than silver.

17 The highway of the upright *is* to depart
from evil;
He who keeps his way preserves his soul.

18 Pride *goes* before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.

19 Better *to be* of a humble spirit with
the lowly,
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

20 He who heeds the word wisely will
find good,
And whoever trusts in the LORD,
happy *is* he.

21 The wise in heart will be called prudent,
And sweetness of the lips increases
learning.

22 Understanding *is* a wellspring of life
to him who has it.
But the correction of fools *is* folly.

23 The heart of the wise teaches his mouth,
And adds learning to his lips.

24 Pleasant words *are like* a honeycomb,



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

A merry heart does good, like medicine. | PROVERBS 17:22

When my mother's health began to quickly decline, she had to be hospitalized on several occasions. Family members kept a twenty-four-hour-a-day vigil during one of her hospital stays. We tried to arrange our schedules as conveniently as possible for everyone. On the third night of her stay in the hospital, my sister and I were there together for a while, a rare treat (in spite of the circumstances) because of my traveling schedule, so we were catching up.

She had been up all night with mama the night before and then had worked that day. She told me that when she went into work that morning, a lady came in and shared a story that helped her get through the day.

The lady had gone shopping at Hanes Mall in Winston Salem, North Carolina. She shopped for a while and was getting tired. She had a pack of cheese crackers in her purse, so she decided to sit down on one of the benches in front of the Cookie Factory to eat her snack and rest. She went into the Cookie Factory to get a Coke, then returned to the bench and sat down again.

Sweetness to the soul and health to
the bones.

25 There is a way *that seems* right to a man,
But its end *is* the way of death.

26 The person who labors, labors for
himself,
For his *hungry* mouth drives him *on*.

27 An ungodly man digs up evil,
And *it is* on his lips like a burning fire.
28 A perverse man sows strife,
And a whisperer separates the best of
friends.
29 A violent man entices his neighbor,
And leads him in a way *that is* not good.
30 He winks his eye to devise perverse
things;
He purses his lips *and* brings about evil.
31 The silver-haired head *is* a crown of glory,
If it is found in the way of
righteousness.

32 *He who is* slow to anger *is* better than
the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit than he
who takes a city.

33 The lot is cast into the lap,
But its every decision *is* from the LORD.

17 Better *is* a dry morsel with quietness,
Than a house full of feasting[a]
with strife.

2 A wise servant will rule over a son who
causes shame,
And will share an inheritance among
the brothers.

17:1 [a]Or *sacrificial meals*

Now, there was a man sitting on the bench also. She looked for her crackers, and there lay the pack on the bench between her and the strange man. She reached down, picked up the pack, opened it, took one of the crackers and then returned the pack to the same spot on the bench. She thought she noticed the man eating also. Sure enough, when she looked at the pack there were two crackers missing. He had eaten one of them. Neither of them spoke, and she thought, *Well, maybe he's hungry*. She reached down and took another cracker, and he did the same. She was getting irritated now. *The nerve of this guy!* Still, neither spoke. Now, there were just two crackers left in the pack. She took one of them and began to eat it. He politely reached over and took the last one and ate it. She was furious now, but still neither one spoke a word. When he finished eating the cracker, he got up and went into the Cookie Factory. He bought a cookie and came back to the bench and sat down. He broke the cookie in half and placed half of it where the crackers had been. Still no one spoke. She thought, *The nerve of him, eating my crackers. I'll take half of his cookie and eat it*. When she had finished eating the cookie, she got up and left. Neither one ever spoke a word. When she arrived home later that day, she opened her purse and there she found her package of cheese crackers.

That ironic story brought laughter and light-heartedness into a room filled with anxiety and weariness. We were all refreshed, including mama. She loved to laugh. When people laugh together, they cease to be young and old, master and pupils, worker and driver. They have become a single group of human beings, enjoying their existence.

3 The refining pot *is* for silver and the
furnace for gold,
But the LORD tests the hearts.

4 An evildoer gives heed to false lips;
A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue.

5 He who mocks the poor reproaches his
Maker;
He who is glad at calamity will not go
unpunished.

6 Children's children *are* the crown of
old men,
And the glory of children *is* their father.

7 Excellent speech is not becoming to
a fool,
Much less lying lips to a prince.

8 A present *is* a precious stone in the
eyes of its possessor;
Wherever he turns, he prospers.

9 He who covers a transgression seeks love,
But he who repeats a matter separates
friends.

10 Rebuke is more effective for a wise *man*
Than a hundred blows on a fool.

11 An evil *man* seeks only rebellion;
Therefore a cruel messenger will be
sent against him.

12 Let a man meet a bear robbed of
her cubs,
Rather than a fool in his folly.

13 Whoever rewards evil for good,
Evil will not depart from his house.

14 The beginning of strife *is like* releasing
water;
Therefore stop contention before a
quarrel starts.

15 He who justifies the wicked, and he
who condemns the just,
Both of them alike *are* an abomination
to the LORD.

16 Why *is there* in the hand of a fool the
purchase price of wisdom,
Since *he has* no heart *for it?*

17 A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.

18 A man devoid of understanding shakes
hands in a pledge,
And becomes surety for his friend.

19 He who loves transgression loves strife,
And he who exalts his gate seeks
destruction.

20 He who has a deceitful heart finds
no good,
And he who has a perverse tongue
falls into evil.

21 He who begets a scoffer *does so* to his
sorrow,
And the father of a fool has no joy.

22 A merry heart does good, *like* medicine,[a]
But a broken spirit dries the bones.

23 A wicked *man* accepts a bribe behind
the back[a]
To pervert the ways of justice.

24 Wisdom *is* in the sight of him who has
understanding,
But the eyes of a fool *are* on the ends
of the earth.

25 A foolish son *is* a grief to his father,
And bitterness to her who bore him.

26 Also, to punish the righteous *is* not
good,
Nor to strike princes for *their*
uprightness.

27 He who has knowledge spares his words,
And a man of understanding is of a
calm spirit.
28 Even a fool is counted wise when he
holds his peace;
When he shuts his lips, *he is considered*
perceptive.

18 A man who isolates himself seeks
his own desire;
He rages against all wise judgment.

2 A fool has no delight in understanding,
But in expressing his own heart.

17:22 [a]Or *makes medicine even better* **17:23** [a]Literally *from the bosom*

3 When the wicked comes, contempt
comes also;
And with dishonor *comes* reproach.

4 The words of a man's mouth *are* deep
waters;
The wellspring of wisdom *is* a flowing
brook.

5 *It is* not good to show partiality to the
wicked,
Or to overthrow the righteous in
judgment.

6 A fool's lips enter into contention,
And his mouth calls for blows.
7 A fool's mouth *is* his destruction,
And his lips *are* the snare of his soul.
8 The words of a talebearer *are* like
tasty trifles,[a]
And they go down into the inmost body.

9 He who is slothful in his work
Is a brother to him who is a great
destroyer.

10 The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower;
The righteous run to it and are safe.
11 The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city,
And like a high wall in his own esteem.

12 Before destruction the heart of a man
is haughty,
And before honor *is* humility.

13 He who answers a matter before he
hears *it*,
It *is* folly and shame to him.

14 The spirit of a man will sustain him in
sickness,
But who can bear a broken spirit?

15 The heart of the prudent acquires
knowledge,
And the ear of the wise seeks
knowledge.

16 A man's gift makes room for him,
And brings him before great men.

17 The first *one* to plead his cause *seems*
right,
Until his neighbor comes and
examines him.

18 Casting lots causes contentions to cease,
And keeps the mighty apart.

19 A brother offended *is harder to win* than
a strong city,
And contentions *are* like the bars of
a castle.

20 A man's stomach shall be satisfied from
the fruit of his mouth;
From the produce of his lips he shall
be filled.

21 Death and life *are* in the power of the
tongue,
And those who love it will eat its fruit.

22 *He who* finds a wife finds a good *thing*,
And obtains favor from the LORD.

23 The poor *man* uses entreaties,
But the rich answers roughly.

24 A man *who has* friends must himself be
friendly,[a]
But there is a friend *who* sticks closer
than a brother.

19 Better *is* the poor who walks in his
integrity
Than *one who is* perverse in his lips,
and is a fool.

18:8 [a]A Jewish tradition reads *wounds*. **18:24** [a]Following Greek manuscripts, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *may come to ruin*.



2 Also it is not good *for* a soul *to be*
without knowledge,
And he sins who hastens with *his* feet.

3 The foolishness of a man twists his way,
And his heart frets against the LORD.

4 Wealth makes many friends,
But the poor is separated from his friend.

5 A false witness will not go unpunished,
And *he who* speaks lies will not escape.

6 Many entreat the favor of the nobility,
And every man *is* a friend to one who
gives gifts.
7 All the brothers of the poor hate him;
How much more do his friends go far
from him!
He may pursue *them with* words, *yet*
they abandon *him.*

8 He who gets wisdom loves his own soul;
He who keeps understanding will
find good.

9 A false witness will not go unpunished,
And *he who* speaks lies shall perish.

10 Luxury is not fitting for a fool,
Much less for a servant to rule over
princes.

11 The discretion of a man makes him
slow to anger,
And his glory *is* to overlook a
transgression.

12 The king's wrath *is* like the roaring
of a lion,
But his favor *is* like dew on the grass.

13 A foolish son *is* the ruin of his father,
And the contentions of a wife *are* a
continual dripping.

14 Houses and riches *are* an inheritance
from fathers,
But a prudent wife *is* from the LORD.

15 Laziness casts *one* into a deep sleep,
And an idle person will suffer hunger.

16 He who keeps the commandment
keeps his soul,
But he who is careless[a] of his ways
will die.

17 He who has pity on the poor lends to
the LORD,
And He will pay back what he has given.

18 Chasten your son while there is hope,
And do not set your heart on his
destruction.[a]

19 *A man of* great wrath will suffer
punishment;
For if you rescue *him,* you will have to
do it again.

20 Listen to counsel and receive instruction,
That you may be wise in your latter days.

21 There are many plans in a man's heart,
Nevertheless the LORD's counsel—that
will stand.

22 What is desired in a man is kindness,
And a poor man is better than a liar.

Music . . . will help dissolve your perplexities and purify your character and sensibilities, and in time of care and sorrow, will keep a fountain of joy alive in you.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

23 The fear of the LORD *leads* to life,
And *he who has it* will abide in
satisfaction;
He will not be visited with evil.

24 A lazy *man* buries his hand in the bowl,[a]
And will not so much as bring it to his
mouth again.

25 Strike a scoffer, and the simple will
become wary;
Rebuke one who has understanding,
and he will discern knowledge.

26 He who mistreats *his* father *and* chases
away *his* mother

19:16 [a]Literally *despises,* figurative of recklessness or carelessness
19:18 [a]Literally *to put him to death;* a Jewish tradition reads *on his crying.*
19:24 [a]Septuagint and Syriac read *bosom;* Targum and Vulgate read *armpit.*

Is a son who causes shame and brings
reproach.

27 Cease listening to instruction, my son,
And you will stray from the words of
knowledge.

28 A disreputable witness scorns justice,
And the mouth of the wicked devours
iniquity.

29 Judgments are prepared for scoffers,
And beatings for the backs of fools.

20 Wine *is* a mocker,
Strong drink *is* a brawler,
And whoever is led astray by it is
not wise.

2 The wrath[a] of a king *is* like the roaring
of a lion;
Whoever provokes him to anger sins
against his own life.

3 *It is* honorable for a man to stop striving,
Since any fool can start a quarrel.

4 The lazy *man* will not plow because
of winter;
He will beg during harvest and *have*
nothing.

5 Counsel in the heart of man *is like*
deep water,
But a man of understanding will draw
it out.

6 Most men will proclaim each his own
goodness,
But who can find a faithful man?

7 The righteous *man* walks in his integrity;
His children *are* blessed after him.

8 A king who sits on the throne of
judgment
Scatters all evil with his eyes.

9 Who can say, "I have made my heart
clean,
I am pure from my sin"?

10 Diverse weights *and* diverse measures,
They *are* both alike, an abomination to
the LORD.

11 Even a child is known by his deeds,
Whether what he does *is* pure and right.

12 The hearing ear and the seeing eye,
The LORD has made them both.

13 Do not love sleep, lest you come to
poverty;
Open your eyes, *and* you will be
satisfied with bread.

14 "*It is* good for nothing,"[a] cries the buyer;
But when he has gone his way, then
he boasts.

15 There is gold and a multitude of rubies,
But the lips of knowledge *are* a
precious jewel.

16 Take the garment of one who is surety
for a stranger,
And hold it as a pledge *when it* is for
a seductress.

17 Bread gained by deceit *is* sweet to
a man,
But afterward his mouth will be filled
with gravel.

18 Plans are established by counsel;
By wise counsel wage war.

19 He who goes about *as* a talebearer
reveals secrets;
Therefore do not associate with one
who flatters with his lips.

20 Whoever curses his father or his mother,
His lamp will be put out in deep
darkness.

21 An inheritance gained hastily at the
beginning
Will not be blessed at the end.

22 Do not say, "I will recompense evil";
Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.

23 Diverse weights *are* an abomination to
the LORD,
And dishonest scales *are* not good.

24 A man's steps *are* of the LORD;

20:2 [a]Literally *fear* or *terror* which is produced by the king's wrath
20:14 [a]Literally *evil, evil*

How then can a man understand his
own way?

25 *It is* a snare for a man to devote rashly
something as holy,
And afterward to reconsider *his* vows.

26 A wise king sifts out the wicked,
And brings the threshing wheel over
them.

27 The spirit of a man *is* the lamp of
the LORD,
Searching all the inner depths of his
heart.[a]

28 Mercy and truth preserve the king,
And by lovingkindness he upholds his
throne.

29 The glory of young men *is* their
strength,
And the splendor of old men *is* their
gray head.

30 Blows that hurt cleanse away evil,
As *do* stripes the inner depths of the
heart.[a]

21 The king's heart *is* in the hand
of the LORD,
Like the rivers of water;
He turns it wherever He wishes.

2 Every way of a man *is* right in his
own eyes,
But the LORD weighs the hearts.

3 To do righteousness and justice
Is more acceptable to the LORD than
sacrifice.

4 A haughty look, a proud heart,
And the plowing[a] of the wicked *are* sin.

5 The plans of the diligent *lead* surely
to plenty,
But *those of* everyone *who is* hasty,
surely to poverty.

20:27 [a]Literally *the rooms of the belly* **20:30** [a]Literally *the rooms of the belly*
21:4 [a]Or *lamp*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

A wise man scales the city of the mighty, and brings down the trusted stronghold. | PROVERBS 21:22

We do not give someone something to accept if we do not give them something to reject. It is one thing to present our Lord Jesus as the only true and living stronghold; it is another thing to tear down the strongholds that are not Him. It is important when we point a person to the Lord, to point them away from all substitutes for the Lord. If all we said was, "Look to Jesus," everyone would applaud us. But if we said, "Look to Jesus, not missions or doctrine or church or spiritual disciplines"—if we turned their eyes away from the strongholds in which many trust—then our message would be truer to the Lord. We need to be wise men as we proclaim Christ. We not only need to point to Him as the only safe refuge to run to, but we must scale the city of the mighty and bring down their trusted strongholds.

6 Getting treasures by a lying tongue
Is the fleeting fantasy of those who
seek death.[a]

7 The violence of the wicked will
destroy them,[a]
Because they refuse to do justice.

8 The way of a guilty man *is* perverse;[a]
But *as for* the pure, his work *is* right.

9 Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop,
Than in a house shared with a
contentious woman.

10 The soul of the wicked desires evil;
His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.

11 When the scoffer is punished, the
simple is made wise;
But when the wise is instructed, he
receives knowledge.

12 The righteous *God* wisely considers the
house of the wicked,
Overthrowing the wicked for *their*
wickedness.

13 Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of
the poor
Will also cry himself and not be heard.

14 A gift in secret pacifies anger,
And a bribe behind the back,[a] strong
wrath.

15 *It is* a joy for the just to do justice,
But destruction *will come* to the
workers of iniquity.

16 A man who wanders from the way of
understanding
Will rest in the assembly of the dead.

17 He who loves pleasure *will be* a poor man;
He who loves wine and oil will not
be rich.

18 The wicked *shall be* a ransom for the
righteous,
And the unfaithful for the upright.

19 Better to dwell in the wilderness,
Than with a contentious and angry
woman.

20 *There is* desirable treasure,
And oil in the dwelling of the wise,
But a foolish man squanders it.

21 He who follows righteousness and mercy
Finds life, righteousness, and honor.

22 A wise *man* scales the city of the mighty,
And brings down the trusted
stronghold.

23 Whoever guards his mouth and tongue
Keeps his soul from troubles.

24 A proud *and* haughty *man*— "Scoffer"
is his name;
He acts with arrogant pride.

25 The desire of the lazy *man* kills him,
For his hands refuse to labor.
26 He covets greedily all day long,
But the righteous gives and does
not spare.

27 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an
abomination;
How much more *when* he brings it with
wicked intent!

28 A false witness shall perish,
But the man who hears *him* will speak
endlessly.

29 A wicked man hardens his face,
But *as for* the upright, he establishes[a]
his way.

30 *There is* no wisdom or understanding
Or counsel against the LORD.

31 The horse *is* prepared for the day
of battle,
But deliverance *is* of the LORD.

22 A *good* name is to be chosen rather
than great riches,
Loving favor rather than silver and gold.

2 The rich and the poor have this in
common,
The LORD *is* the maker of them all.

21:6 [a]Septuagint reads *Pursue vanity on the snares of death;* Vulgate reads *Is vain and foolish, and shall stumble on the snares of death;* Targum reads *They shall be destroyed, and they shall fall who seek death.* **21:7** [a]Literally *drag them away* **21:8** [a]Or *The way of a man is perverse and strange* **21:14** [a]Literally *in the bosom* **21:29** [a]Qere and Septuagint read *understands.*

3 A prudent *man* foresees evil and hides himself,
But the simple pass on and are punished.

4 By humility *and* the fear of the LORD
Are riches and honor and life.

5 Thorns *and* snares *are* in the way of the perverse;
He who guards his soul will be far from them.

6 Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.

7 The rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower *is* servant to the lender.

8 He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow,
And the rod of his anger will fail.

9 He who has a generous eye will be blessed,
For he gives of his bread to the poor.

10 Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave;
Yes, strife and reproach will cease.

11 He who loves purity of heart
And has grace on his lips,
The king *will be* his friend.

12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge,
But He overthrows the words of the faithless.

13 The lazy *man* says, "*There is* a lion outside!
I shall be slain in the streets!"

14 The mouth of an immoral woman *is* a deep pit;
He who is abhorred by the LORD will fall there.

15 Foolishness *is* bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

16 He who oppresses the poor to increase his *riches,*
And he who gives to the rich, *will* surely *come* to poverty.

Sayings of the Wise

17 Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,
And apply your heart to my knowledge;
18 For *it is* a pleasant thing if you keep them within you;
Let them all be fixed upon your lips,
19 So that your trust may be in the LORD;
I have instructed you today, even you.
20 Have I not written to you excellent things
Of counsels and knowledge,
21 That I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth,
That you may answer words of truth
To those who send to you?

22 Do not rob the poor because he *is* poor,
Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate;
23 For the LORD will plead their cause,
And plunder the soul of those who plunder them.

24 Make no friendship with an angry man,
And with a furious man do not go,
25 Lest you learn his ways
And set a snare for your soul.

26 Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge,
One of those who is surety for debts;
27 If you have nothing *with which* to pay,
Why should he take away your bed from under you?

28 Do not remove the ancient landmark
Which your fathers have set.

29 Do you see a man *who* excels in his work?
He will stand before kings;
He will not stand before unknown *men.*

23 When you sit down to eat with a ruler,
Consider carefully what *is* before you;
2 And put a knife to your throat
If you *are* a man given to appetite.
3 Do not desire his delicacies,
For they *are* deceptive food.

4 Do not overwork to be rich;
Because of your own understanding, cease!

5 Will you set your eyes on that which
is not?
For *riches* certainly make themselves
wings;
They fly away like an eagle *toward* heaven.

6 Do not eat the bread of a miser,[a]
Nor desire his delicacies;
7 For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.
"Eat and drink!" he says to you,
But his heart is not with you.
8 The morsel you have eaten, you will
vomit up,
And waste your pleasant words.

9 Do not speak in the hearing of a fool,
For he will despise the wisdom of your
words.

10 Do not remove the ancient landmark,
Nor enter the fields of the fatherless;
11 For their Redeemer *is* mighty;
He will plead their cause against you.

12 Apply your heart to instruction,
And your ears to words of knowledge.

13 Do not withhold correction from
a child,
For *if* you beat him with a rod, he will
not die.
14 You shall beat him with a rod,
And deliver his soul from hell.[a]

15 My son, if your heart is wise,
My heart will rejoice—indeed, I myself;
16 Yes, my inmost being will rejoice
When your lips speak right things.

17 Do not let your heart envy sinners,
But *be zealous* for the fear of the LORD
all the day;
18 For surely there is a hereafter,
And your hope will not be cut off.

19 Hear, my son, and be wise;
And guide your heart in the way.
20 Do not mix with winebibbers,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;
21 For the drunkard and the glutton will
come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe *a man*
with rags.

22 Listen to your father who begot you,
And do not despise your mother when
she is old.

23 Buy the truth, and do not sell *it,*
Also wisdom and instruction and
understanding.

24 The father of the righteous will greatly
rejoice,
And he who begets a wise *child* will
delight in him.
25 Let your father and your mother be glad,
And let her who bore you rejoice.

26 My son, give me your heart,
And let your eyes observe my ways.
27 For a harlot *is* a deep pit,
And a seductress *is* a narrow well.
28 She also lies in wait as *for* a victim,
And increases the unfaithful among men.

29 Who has woe?
Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions?
Who has complaints?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
30 Those who linger long at the wine,
Those who go in search of mixed wine.
31 Do not look on the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup,
When it swirls around smoothly;
32 At the last it bites like a serpent,
And stings like a viper.
33 Your eyes will see strange things,
And your heart will utter perverse
things.
34 Yes, you will be like one who lies down
in the midst of the sea,
Or like one who lies at the top of the
mast, *saying:*
35 "They have struck me, *but* I was not hurt;
They have beaten me, but I did not
feel *it.*
When shall I awake, that I may seek
another *drink?*"

24 Do not be envious of evil men,
Nor desire to be with them;
2 For their heart devises violence,
And their lips talk of troublemaking.

23:6 [a]Literally *one who has an evil eye* **23:14** [a]Or *Sheol*

3 Through wisdom a house is built,
And by understanding it is established;
4 By knowledge the rooms are filled
With all precious and pleasant riches.

5 A wise man *is* strong,
Yes, a man of knowledge increases strength;
6 For by wise counsel you will wage your own war,
And in a multitude of counselors *there is* safety.

7 Wisdom *is* too lofty for a fool;
He does not open his mouth in the gate.

8 He who plots to do evil
Will be called a schemer.
9 The devising of foolishness *is* sin,
And the scoffer *is* an abomination to men.

10 *If* you faint in the day of adversity,
Your strength *is* small.

11 Deliver *those who* are drawn toward death,
And hold back *those* stumbling to the slaughter.
12 If you say, "Surely we did not know this,"
Does not He who weighs the hearts consider *it?*
He who keeps your soul, does He *not* know *it?*
And will He *not* render to *each* man according to his deeds?

13 My son, eat honey because *it is* good,
And the honeycomb *which is* sweet to your taste;
14 So *shall* the knowledge of wisdom *be* to your soul;
If you have found *it,* there is a prospect,
And your hope will not be cut off.

15 Do not lie in wait, O wicked *man,* against the dwelling of the righteous;
Do not plunder his resting place;



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity. | PROVERBS 24:16

I was reared in a rural farming community in the Piedmont section of North Carolina. In 1969, every family in that community had to leave their homes and relocate to make way for a huge water reservoir and power plant. Claude and I had built our first home there four years earlier. My parents had lived there forty-plus years. I used to smile and say that if I wanted to revisit the place of my birth and trace the paths and creek banks where I roamed and played as a child, I would need scuba diving equipment. But it was very difficult for me at the time.

Perhaps that is the reason a similar story I heard about a town in Maine caught my eye. An entire town would be submerged due to a power plant project. The people were given many months to arrange their affairs and relocate. During those months, a curious thing happened. All improvements

16 For a righteous *man* may fall seven
times
And rise again,
But the wicked shall fall by calamity.

17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
And do not let your heart be glad
when he stumbles;
18 Lest the LORD see *it,* and it
displease Him,
And He turn away His wrath from him.

19 Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the wicked;
20 For there will be no prospect for the
evil *man;*
The lamp of the wicked will be put out.

21 My son, fear the LORD and the king;
Do not associate with those given to
change;
22 For their calamity will rise suddenly,
And who knows the ruin those two can
bring?

Further Sayings of the Wise

23 These *things* also *belong* to the wise:

It is not good to show partiality in
judgment.
24 He who says to the wicked, "You *are*
righteous,"
Him the people will curse;
Nations will abhor him.
25 But those who rebuke *the wicked* will
have delight,
And a good blessing will come upon
them.

26 He who gives a right answer kisses
the lips.

27 Prepare your outside work,
Make it fit for yourself in the
field;
And afterward build your house.

28 Do not be a witness against your
neighbor without cause,

ceased. No painting was done. No repairs were made on the buildings, roads, or sidewalks. A long time before the waters came, the town looked uncared for and abandoned, even though the people had not yet moved away. One citizen explained, "Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present." That town was cursed with hopelessness because it had no future. But unlike the town, every citizen of that town could experience a new beginning.

Many heroes of Scripture needed new beginnings: Adam and Eve after they ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3); Moses after he killed the Egyptian (Ex. 2:12); David after his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11); Elijah after an emotional breakdown in the desert (1 Kin. 19); the disciples after Good Friday (Matt. 26). Maybe you need a new beginning.

Through the experience of losing the only place I had ever known as home, Claude and I learned a great lesson. While we were expecting our youngest son, we packed everything we owned into our truck and moved from "home" to a ten-foot-wide trailer. God showed us that things of earth are only temporary, but our relationship with each other and our Lord was eternal. More than forty years have passed now since that new beginning, and God has proved faithful. As children of God, our faith for the future is not in economic and political systems, but in the kingdom of God.

For would you deceive[a] with your lips?
29 Do not say, "I will do to him just as he has done to me;
I will render to the man according to his work."

30 I went by the field of the lazy *man*,
And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding;
31 And there it was, all overgrown with thorns;
Its surface was covered with nettles;
Its stone wall was broken down.
32 When I saw *it*, I considered *it* well;
I looked on *it and* received instruction:
33 A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to rest;
34 So shall your poverty come *like* a prowler,
And your need like an armed man.

Further Wise Sayings of Solomon

25 These also *are* proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied:

2 *It is* the glory of God to conceal a matter,
But the glory of kings *is* to search out a matter.

3 *As* the heavens for height and the earth for depth,
So the heart of kings *is* unsearchable.

4 Take away the dross from silver,
And it will go to the silversmith *for* jewelry.
5 Take away the wicked from before the king,
And his throne will be established in righteousness.

24:28 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Do not deceive.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

I went by the field of the lazy man, and by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; and there it was, all overgrown with thorns; its surface was covered with nettles; its stone wall was broken down. When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction. | PROVERBS 24:30–32

The hungry heart and the teachable spirit can make great spiritual progress in a very unlikely school. Those who have earnestly desired a heart-knowledge of the Lord Jesus do not lack instructors. They have mentors all around them. They do not mourn and complain that their opportunities are few and that sound teachers are rare. Every scene that passes before their eyes, every sound that comes into their ears becomes an occasion to behold the Lord and learn of His ways.

Consider the wise man in Proverbs 24 who passed by the field of the sluggard. When he looked at the vineyard he saw that it was completely overgrown with thistles and covered with nettles. Around the vineyard was a stone wall broken down in many places. He did not criticize his neighbor for neglect, nor did he malign him because his vineyard was desolate and wasted. He did not gossip about his laziness or the terrible public testimony created by his indolence. No! Instead he said, "When I saw it, I considered

6 Do not exalt yourself in the presence
of the king,
And do not stand in the place of the
great;
7 For *it is* better that he say to you,
"Come up here,"
Than that you should be put lower in
the presence of the prince,
Whom your eyes have seen.

8 Do not go hastily to court;
For what will you do in the end,
When your neighbor has put you to
shame?
9 Debate your case with your neighbor,
And do not disclose the secret to
another;
10 Lest he who hears *it* expose your
shame,
And your reputation be ruined.

11 A word fitly spoken *is like* apples of gold
In settings of silver.
12 *Like* an earring of gold and an
ornament of fine gold
Is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear.

13 Like the cold of snow in time of harvest
Is a faithful messenger to those who
send him,
For he refreshes the soul of his masters.

14 Whoever falsely boasts of giving
Is like clouds and wind without rain.

15 By long forbearance a ruler is
persuaded,
And a gentle tongue breaks a bone.

16 Have you found honey?
Eat only as much as you need,
Lest you be filled with it and vomit.

it well; I looked on it and received instruction." Perhaps no vineyard has ever produced more fruit than that sluggard's garden produced for this hungry heart. I am quite sure the owner of the field did not reap much of a harvest from it, but that pilgrim onlooker certainly did. Folly was turned to wisdom. The wise man looked at the devastation and took counsel. The overgrown garden brought forth fruit for the humble heart. I am quite sure the lesson of the sluggard's vineyard made more of an impact on the life of that passerby than any lecture he could have ever heard on the importance of diligence.

Let us never stop praising the Lord for the mentors He has brought into our lives. Let us thank Him for their conscious and unconscious influence. But let us not forget to thank Him at the same time for the hidden instruction that we may reap from the desolate house, the callous heart, and the many gardens that lie neglected and wasted and broken down all around us.

They are never without teachers who live with their eyes opened wide to every occasion that they may be taught of God by every means and brought into a more intimate union with Him. I pray this note finds you enjoying a rich union with the Lord and that you know with deep conviction how much He rejoices in you.

Rest! Abide! Worship!

Like one who takes away a garment in cold weather, and like vinegar on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.
PROVERBS 25:20

17 Seldom set foot in your neighbor's
house,
Lest he become weary of you and
hate you.

18 A man who bears false witness against
his neighbor
Is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow.

19 Confidence in an unfaithful *man* in
time of trouble
Is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint.

20 *Like* one who takes away a garment in
cold weather,
And like vinegar on soda,
Is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him
bread to eat;
And if he is thirsty, give him water to
drink;
22 For *so* you will heap coals of fire on
his head,
And the LORD will reward you.

23 The north wind brings forth rain,
And a backbiting tongue an angry
countenance.

24 *It is* better to dwell in a corner of a
housetop,
Than in a house shared with a
contentious woman.

25 *As* cold water to a weary soul,
So *is* good news from a far country.

26 A righteous *man* who falters before
the wicked
Is like a murky spring and a polluted well.

27 *It is* not good to eat much honey;
So to seek one's own glory *is not* glory.

28 Whoever *has* no rule over his own spirit
Is like a city broken down, without walls.



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it will be counted a curse to him. | PROVERBS 27:14

Proverbs 27:14 was one of Doug's favorite verses. He did not appreciate any shocks in the morning or jolts to the precarious balance of his senses in any way. We trod very softly until after he had his bacon, eggs, juice, and coffee.

Family life may very well rise and fall on how we treat one another in the morning. A little graciousness, a little carefulness, a little companionable elbow room will do a lot to set the day off right.

The Jewish family at the time of Christ had spoken benedictions for all the routines of the day. There were eighteen in all. The morning benediction was spoken aloud before anything else was said.

26 As snow in summer and rain in harvest,
So honor is not fitting for a fool.

2 Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow,
So a curse without cause shall not alight.

3 A whip for the horse,
A bridle for the donkey,
And a rod for the fool's back.
4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest you also be like him.
5 Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in his own eyes.
6 He who sends a message by the hand of a fool
Cuts off *his own* feet *and* drinks violence.
7 *Like* the legs of the lame that hang limp
Is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
8 Like one who binds a stone in a sling
Is he who gives honor to a fool.
9 *Like* a thorn *that* goes into the hand of a drunkard
Is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
10 The great *God* who formed everything
Gives the fool *his* hire and the transgressor *his* wages.[a]
11 As a dog returns to his own vomit,
So a fool repeats his folly.
12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.

13 The lazy *man* says, "*There is* a lion in the road!
A fierce lion *is* in the streets!"
14 *As* a door turns on its hinges,
So *does* the lazy *man* on his bed.
15 The lazy *man* buries his hand in the bowl;[a]
It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.
16 The lazy *man is* wiser in his own eyes
Than seven men who can answer sensibly.

17 He who passes by *and* meddles in a quarrel not his own
Is like one who takes a dog by the ears.

26:10 [a]The Hebrew is difficult; ancient and modern translators differ greatly. **26:15** [a]Compare 19:24

First, there was the waking greeting which was exchanged instead of "Good morning." It was "Blessed be he who loveth his people Israel." This was followed by the morning benediction which was, "O my God, the soul which thou gavest me is pure; thou didst create it, thou didst form it, thou didst breathe it into me. Thou preservest it within me, and thou wilt take it from me, but wilt restore unto me hereafter. So long as the soul is within me, I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, Sovereign of all works, Lord of all souls! Blessed art thou, O Lord, who restorest souls unto the dead."

It is an unusual way to start the day, and strange to our modern mind, but nevertheless a wonderful way. No loud shouts that will be counted a curse. It is even possible to simplify it and say with a whole heart today, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!" (Ps. 150:6).

18 Like a madman who throws firebrands,
arrows, and death,
19 *Is* the man *who* deceives his neighbor,
And says, "I was only joking!"

20 Where *there is* no wood, the fire
goes out;
And where *there is* no talebearer,
strife ceases.
21 *As* charcoal *is* to burning coals, and
wood to fire,
So *is* a contentious man to kindle strife.
22 The words of a talebearer *are* like tasty
trifles,
And they go down into the inmost body.

23 Fervent lips with a wicked heart
Are like earthenware covered with
silver dross.

24 He who hates, disguises *it* with his lips,
And lays up deceit within himself;
25 When he speaks kindly, do not believe
him,
For *there are* seven abominations in
his heart;
26 *Though his* hatred is covered by deceit,
His wickedness will be revealed before
the assembly.

27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it,
And he who rolls a stone will have it
roll back on him.

28 A lying tongue hates *those who are*
crushed by it,
And a flattering mouth works ruin.

27 Do not boast about tomorrow,
For you do not know what a day
may bring forth.

2 Let another man praise you, and not
your own mouth;
A stranger, and not your own lips.

3 A stone *is* heavy and sand *is* weighty,
But a fool's wrath *is* heavier than both
of them.

4 Wrath *is* cruel and anger a torrent,
But who *is* able to stand before
jealousy?

5 Open rebuke *is* better
Than love carefully concealed.

6 Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend,
But the kisses of an enemy *are*
deceitful.

7 A satisfied soul loathes the
honeycomb,
But to a hungry soul every bitter
thing *is* sweet.

8 Like a bird that wanders from its nest
Is a man who wanders from his place.

9 Ointment and perfume delight
the heart,
And the sweetness of a man's friend
gives delight by hearty counsel.

10 Do not forsake your own friend or your
father's friend,
Nor go to your brother's house in the
day of your calamity;
Better *is* a neighbor nearby than a
brother far away.

11 My son, be wise, and make my
heart glad,
That I may answer him who
reproaches me.

12 A prudent *man* foresees evil *and* hides
himself;
The simple pass on *and* are punished.

13 Take the garment of him who is surety
for a stranger,
And hold it in pledge *when* he is surety
for a seductress.

14 He who blesses his friend with a loud
voice, rising early in the morning,
It will be counted a curse to him.

15 A continual dripping on a very
rainy day
And a contentious woman are alike;
16 Whoever restrains her restrains
the wind,
And grasps oil with his right hand.

17 *As* iron sharpens iron,
So a man sharpens the countenance
of his friend.

18 Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat
its fruit;

So he who waits on his master will be
honored.

19 As in water face *reflects* face,
So a man's heart *reveals* the man.

20 Hell[a] and Destruction[b] are never full;
So the eyes of man are never satisfied.

21 The refining pot *is* for silver and the
furnace for gold,
And a man *is valued* by what others
say of him.

22 Though you grind a fool in a mortar
with a pestle along with crushed
grain,
Yet his foolishness will not depart
from him.

23 Be diligent to know the state of your
flocks,
And attend to your herds;
24 For riches *are* not forever,
Nor does a crown *endure* to all
generations.
25 *When* the hay is removed, and the
tender grass shows itself,
And the herbs of the mountains are
gathered in,
26 The lambs *will provide* your clothing,
And the goats the price of a field;
27 *You shall have* enough goats' milk for
your food,
For the food of your household,
And the nourishment of your
maidservants.

28 The wicked flee when no one
pursues,
But the righteous are bold as a lion.

2 Because of the transgression of a land,
many *are* its princes;
But by a man of understanding *and*
knowledge
Right will be prolonged.

3 A poor man who oppresses the poor
Is like a driving rain which leaves no food.

4 Those who forsake the law praise the
wicked,
But such as keep the law contend
with them.

5 Evil men do not understand justice,
But those who seek the LORD
understand all.

6 Better *is* the poor who walks in his
integrity
Than one perverse *in his* ways, though
he *be* rich.

7 Whoever keeps the law *is* a discerning
son,
But a companion of gluttons shames
his father.

8 One who increases his possessions by
usury and extortion
Gathers it for him who will pity the poor.

9 One who turns away his ear from
hearing the law,
Even his prayer *is* an abomination.

10 Whoever causes the upright to go
astray in an evil way,
He himself will fall into his own pit;
But the blameless will inherit good.

11 The rich man *is* wise in his own eyes,
But the poor who has understanding
searches him out.

12 When the righteous rejoice, *there is*
great glory;
But when the wicked arise, men hide
themselves.

13 He who covers his sins will not
prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes
them will have mercy.

14 Happy *is* the man who is always
reverent,
But he who hardens his heart will fall
into calamity.

15 *Like* a roaring lion and a charging bear
Is a wicked ruler over poor people.

16 A ruler who lacks understanding *is* a
great oppressor,
But he who hates covetousness will
prolong *his* days.

27:20 [a]Or *Sheol* [b]Hebrew *Abaddon*

Where there is no revelation,
the people cast off restraint;
but happy is he who keeps the law.
PROVERBS 29:18

The Bible is full of dreams and dreamers. According to this reliable source, dreams may turn out to be the roadmap for our lives, the warnings that keep us from tragic blunders, or an aspiration so lofty that we spend the rest of our lives trying to live up to it. Dreams may usher us into heaven or leave us with a limp that will always remind us that it's worth wrestling with angels to find our true identity in God. One thing is sure: as the wise man said, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint" (Prov. 29:18). There must be a dream. There must be a hope.

I love the idea that God has a dream for us. We are a promise He has made to Himself and to the world. Brian McLaren has suggested that we might even paraphrase the line from the prayer Jesus taught us to pray that says, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," this way: "May all your dreams for your creation come true." If we pray this, of course it means that we must "trust God and God's dreams enough to realign our dreams with God's, to dream our little dreams within God's big dream."

As we live this year out, may we dare to dream and may those dreams be lived inside the eternal dream of God, a dream so big that "we will never see the end of it or fully understand it" until we are at last "filled up with God himself" (Eph. 3:19 TLB).

17 A man burdened with bloodshed will
flee into a pit;
Let no one help him.

18 Whoever walks blamelessly will be
saved,
But *he who is* perverse *in his* ways will
suddenly fall.

19 He who tills his land will have plenty of
bread,
But he who follows frivolity will have
poverty enough!

20 A faithful man will abound with
blessings,
But he who hastens to be rich will not
go unpunished.

21 To show partiality *is* not good,
Because for a piece of bread a man will
transgress.

22 A man with an evil eye hastens after
riches,
And does not consider that poverty
will come upon him.

23 He who rebukes a man will find more
favor afterward
Than he who flatters with the tongue.

24 Whoever robs his father or his mother,
And says, "*It is* no transgression,"
The same *is* companion to a destroyer.

25 He who is of a proud heart stirs up
strife,
But he who trusts in the LORD will be
prospered.

26 He who trusts in his own heart is a
fool,
But whoever walks wisely will be
delivered.

27 He who gives to the poor will not lack,
But he who hides his eyes will have
many curses.

28 When the wicked arise, men hide
themselves;
But when they perish, the righteous
increase.

29 He who is often rebuked, *and* hardens *his* neck,
Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

2 When the righteous are in authority,
the people rejoice;
But when a wicked *man* rules, the people groan.

3 Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice,
But a companion of harlots wastes *his* wealth.

4 The king establishes the land by justice,
But he who receives bribes overthrows it.

5 A man who flatters his neighbor
Spreads a net for his feet.

By transgression an evil man is snared,
but the righteous sings and rejoices.
PROVERBS 29:6

6 By transgression an evil man is snared,
But the righteous sings and rejoices.

7 The righteous considers the cause of the poor,
But the wicked does not understand *such* knowledge.

8 Scoffers set a city aflame,
But wise *men* turn away wrath.

9 *If* a wise man contends with a foolish man,
Whether *the fool* rages or laughs, *there is* no peace.

10 The bloodthirsty hate the blameless,
But the upright seek his well-being.[a]

11 A fool vents all his feelings,[a]
But a wise *man* holds them back.

12 If a ruler pays attention to lies,
All his servants *become* wicked.

13 The poor *man* and the oppressor have this in common:
The LORD gives light to the eyes of both.

14 The king who judges the poor with truth,
His throne will be established forever.

15 The rod and rebuke give wisdom,
But a child left *to himself* brings shame to his mother.

16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases;
But the righteous will see their fall.

17 Correct your son, and he will give you rest;
Yes, he will give delight to your soul.

18 Where *there is* no revelation,[a] the people cast off restraint;
But happy *is* he who keeps the law.

19 A servant will not be corrected by mere words;
For though he understands, he will not respond.

20 Do you see a man hasty in his words?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.

21 He who pampers his servant from childhood
Will have him as a son in the end.

22 An angry man stirs up strife,
And a furious man abounds in transgression.

23 A man's pride will bring him low,
But the humble in spirit will retain honor.

24 Whoever is a partner with a thief hates his own life;
He swears to tell the truth,[a] but reveals nothing.

25 The fear of man brings a snare,
But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.

26 Many seek the ruler's favor,
But justice for man *comes* from the LORD.

29:10 [a]Literally *soul* **29:11** [a]Literally *spirit* **29:18** [a]Or *prophetic vision* **29:24** [a]Literally *hears the adjuration*

27 An unjust man *is* an abomination to
the righteous,
And *he who is* upright in the way *is* an
abomination to the wicked.

The Wisdom of Agur

30 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh,
his utterance. This man declared to
Ithiel—to Ithiel and Ucal:

2 Surely I *am* more stupid than *any* man,
And do not have the understanding of
a man.
3 I neither learned wisdom
Nor have knowledge of the Holy One.

4 Who has ascended into heaven, or
descended?
Who has gathered the wind in His fists?
Who has bound the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of
the earth?
What *is* His name, and what *is* His
Son's name,
If you know?

5 Every word of God *is* pure;
He *is* a shield to those who put their
trust in Him.
6 Do not add to His words,
Lest He rebuke you, and you be found
a liar.

7 Two *things* I request of You
(Deprive me not before I die):
8 Remove falsehood and lies far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches—
Feed me with the food allotted to me;



ERNIE HAASE • Homecoming Artist, *Signature Sound*, Formerly with *The Cathedrals*

A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor. | PROVERBS 29:23

When I was a kid I remember learning to ride my bike without training wheels. I remember the fear of sudden pain and the worry of living with big scabs on my knees and elbows. But my dad kept telling me, "I'm right behind you. I won't let you fall."

I trusted him and he kept me from falling many times until I got the hang of riding on two wheels. One day I was able to do it on my own! It felt so good to be able to ride without help from my dad.

Then, it happened. What I feared most. The big crash. Guess what caused the big crash. A rock? Another vehicle? No, my pride caused the crash. I got cocky and arrogant. I was riding with no hands trying to show off for the girls on our block on my banana seat bike.

I've had to learn this lesson more than once. It's when I pedal on ahead of Him and take my eyes off the path He has for me that I get in trouble. When I start showing the onlookers what I can do on my own is when I always crash my life. As a loving Father He is always there to pick me up, but what He wants for me is the maturity to do what His Word has taught me with humility and focus, always confident, not in my performance but in His presence.

9 Lest I be full and deny *You,*
And say, "Who *is* the LORD?"
Or lest I be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.

10 Do not malign a servant to his master,
Lest he curse you, and you be found guilty.

11 *There is* a generation *that* curses its father,
And does not bless its mother.
12 *There is* a generation *that is* pure in its own eyes,
Yet is not washed from its filthiness.
13 *There is* a generation—oh, how lofty are their eyes!
And their eyelids are lifted up.
14 *There is* a generation whose teeth *are like* swords,
And whose fangs *are like* knives,
To devour the poor from off the earth,
And the needy from *among* men.

15 The leech has two daughters—
Give *and* Give!

There are three *things that* are never satisfied,
Four never say, "Enough!":
16 The grave,[a]
The barren womb,
The earth *that* is not satisfied with water—
And the fire never says, "Enough!"

17 The eye *that* mocks *his* father,
And scorns obedience to *his* mother,
The ravens of the valley will pick it out,
And the young eagles will eat it.

18 There are three *things which* are too wonderful for me,
Yes, four *which* I do not understand:
19 The way of an eagle in the air,
The way of a serpent on a rock,
The way of a ship in the midst of the sea,
And the way of a man with a virgin.

20 This *is* the way of an adulterous woman:
She eats and wipes her mouth,
And says, "I have done no wickedness."

21 For three *things* the earth is perturbed,
Yes, for four it cannot bear up:
22 For a servant when he reigns,
A fool when he is filled with food,
23 A hateful *woman* when she is married,
And a maidservant who succeeds her mistress.

24 There are four *things which* are little on the earth,
But they *are* exceedingly wise:
25 The ants *are* a people not strong,
Yet they prepare their food in the summer;
26 The rock badgers[a] are a feeble folk,
Yet they make their homes in the crags;
27 The locusts have no king,
Yet they all advance in ranks;
28 The spider[a] skillfully grasps with its hands,
And it is in kings' palaces.

29 There are three *things which* are majestic in pace,
Yes, four *which* are stately in walk:
30 A lion, *which is* mighty among beasts
And does not turn away from any;
31 A greyhound,[a]
A male goat also,
And a king *whose* troops *are* with him.[b]

32 If you have been foolish in exalting yourself,
Or if you have devised evil, *put your* hand on *your* mouth.
33 For *as* the churning of milk produces butter,
And wringing the nose produces blood,
So the forcing of wrath produces strife.

The Words of King Lemuel's Mother

31 The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him:

2 What, my son?
And what, son of my womb?
And what, son of my vows?
3 Do not give your strength to women,
Nor your ways to that which destroys kings.

30:16 [a]Or *Sheol* **30:26** [a]Or *hyraxes* **30:28** [a]Or *lizard* **31:1** [a]Exact identity unknown [b]A Jewish tradition reads *a king against whom there is no uprising.*

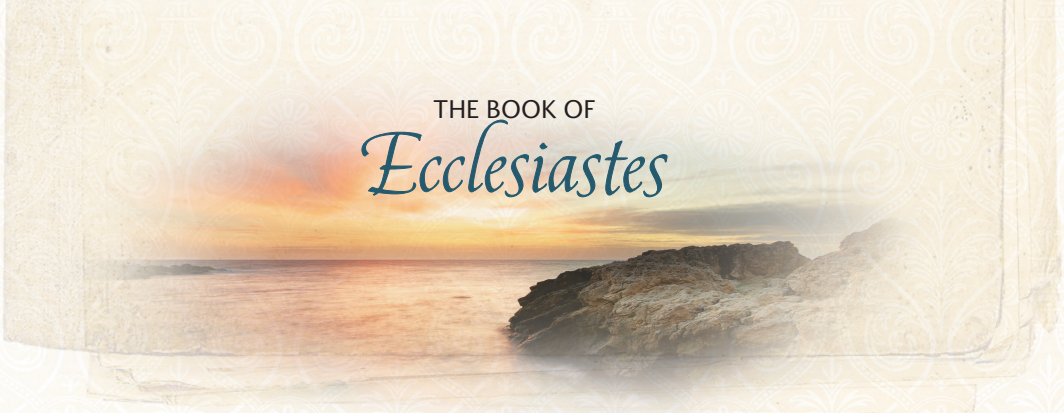
4 *It is* not for kings, O Lemuel,
It is not for kings to drink wine,
Nor for princes intoxicating drink;
5 Lest they drink and forget the law,
And pervert the justice of all the
afflicted.
6 Give strong drink to him who is
perishing,
And wine to those who are bitter of
heart.
7 Let him drink and forget his poverty,
And remember his misery no more.

8 Open your mouth for the speechless,
In the cause of all *who are* appointed
to die.[a]
9 Open your mouth, judge righteously,
And plead the cause of the poor and
needy.

The Virtuous Wife

10 Who[a] can find a virtuous[b] wife?
For her worth *is* far above rubies.
11 The heart of her husband safely trusts
her;
So he will have no lack of gain.
12 She does him good and not evil
All the days of her life.
13 She seeks wool and flax,
And willingly works with her hands.
14 She is like the merchant ships,
She brings her food from afar.
15 She also rises while it is yet night,
And provides food for her household,
And a portion for her maidservants.
16 She considers a field and buys it;
From her profits she plants a vineyard.
17 She girds herself with strength,
And strengthens her arms.
18 She perceives that her merchandise
is good,
And her lamp does not go out by
night.
19 She stretches out her hands to the
distaff,
And her hand holds the spindle.
20 She extends her hand to the poor,
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the
needy.
21 She is not afraid of snow for her
household,
For all her household *is* clothed with
scarlet.
22 She makes tapestry for herself;
Her clothing *is* fine linen and purple.
23 Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sits among the elders of the
land.
24 She makes linen garments and sells *them,*
And supplies sashes for the merchants.
25 Strength and honor *are* her clothing;
She shall rejoice in time to come.
26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
And on her tongue *is* the law of
kindness.
27 She watches over the ways of her
household,
And does not eat the bread of idleness.
28 Her children rise up and call her
blessed;
Her husband *also,* and he praises her:
29 "Many daughters have done well,
But you excel them all."
30 Charm *is* deceitful and beauty *is*
passing,
But a woman *who* fears the LORD, she
shall be praised.
31 Give her of the fruit of her hands,
And let her own works praise her in
the gates.

31:8 [a]Literally *sons of passing away* **31:10** [a]Verses 10 through 31 are an alphabetic acrostic in Hebrew (compare Psalm 119). [b]Literally *a wife of valor,* in the sense of all forms of excellence



THE BOOK OF

Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Life

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of
David, king in Jerusalem.

2 "Vanity[a] of vanities," says the Preacher;
"Vanity of vanities, all *is* vanity."

3 What profit has a man from all his
labor
In which he toils under the sun?
4 *One* generation passes away, and
another generation comes;
But the earth abides forever.
5 The sun also rises, and the sun
goes down,
And hastens to the place where it arose.
6 The wind goes toward the south,
And turns around to the north;
The wind whirls about continually,
And comes again on its circuit.
7 All the rivers run into the sea,
Yet the sea *is* not full;
To the place from which the rivers
come,
There they return again.
8 All things *are* full of labor;
Man cannot express *it*.
The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 That which has been *is* what will be,
That which *is* done is what will be done,
And *there is* nothing new under the sun.
10 Is there anything of which it may be
said,
"See, this *is* new"?
It has already been in ancient times
before us.
11 *There is* no remembrance of former
things,
Nor will there be any remembrance of
things that are to come
By *those* who will come after.

The Grief of Wisdom

12 I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in
Jerusalem. 13 And I set my heart to seek and
search out by wisdom concerning all that
is done under heaven; this burdensome
task God has given to the sons of man, by
which they may be exercised. 14 I have seen
all the works that are done under the sun;
and indeed, all *is* vanity and grasping for
the wind.

15 *What is* crooked cannot be made
straight,
And what is lacking cannot be
numbered.

16 I communed with my heart, saying,
"Look, I have attained greatness, and have
gained more wisdom than all who were
before me in Jerusalem. My heart has
understood great wisdom and knowledge."
17 And I set my heart to know wisdom and
to know madness and folly. I perceived that
this also is grasping for the wind.

18 For in much wisdom *is* much grief,
And he who increases knowledge
increases sorrow.

The Vanity of Pleasure

2 I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test
you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure"; but surely, this also *was* vanity. 2 I said
of laughter—"Madness!"; and of mirth,
"What does it accomplish?" 3 I searched in
my heart *how* to gratify my flesh with wine,
while guiding my heart with wisdom, and
how to lay hold on folly, till I might see
what *was* good for the sons of men to do
under heaven all the days of their lives.

4 I made my works great, I built myself
houses, and planted myself vineyards. 5 I

1:2 [a]Or *Absurdity, Frustration, Futility, Nonsense;* and so throughout this book

I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds.

ECCLESIASTES 2:8

made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. 6I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. 7I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. 8I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, *and* musical instruments[a] of all kinds.

9So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

10 Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.
I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,
For my heart rejoiced in all my labor;
And this was my reward from all my labor.
11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done
And on the labor in which I had toiled;
And indeed all *was* vanity and grasping for the wind.
There was no profit under the sun.

The End of the Wise and the Fool

12 Then I turned myself to consider wisdom and madness and folly;
For what *can* the man *do* who succeeds the king?—
Only what he has already done.

2:8 [a]Exact meaning unknown



ROBERTA CROTEAU • Editor of *Homecoming Magazine,* Author

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. | ECCLESIASTES 3:11

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, or so they say. But sometimes the most beautiful things in the world can't even be seen.

With all the splendor that surrounds creation, it's mesmerizing to think that what we see is barely scratching the surface. For beauty is, in fact, way more than skin-deep. God, the Master Designer, uses the seen and the unseen to dazzle us from afar and to plant His beautiful works both without and within. Simone Weil wrote, "The soul's natural inclination to love beauty is the trap God most frequently uses in order to win it and open it to the breath from on high."

God is not only the Creator of all things beautiful, but also Giver of the gift that enables us to recognize beauty. His trap is a circle of love—enticing, beguiling, and enchanting. As the poet wrote, "Love drew the circle that took

13 Then I saw that wisdom excels folly
As light excels darkness.
14 The wise man's eyes *are* in his head,
But the fool walks in darkness.
Yet I myself perceived
That the same event happens to
them all.

15 So I said in my heart,
"As it happens to the fool,
It also happens to me,
And why was I then more wise?"
Then I said in my heart,
"This also *is* vanity."
16 For *there is* no more remembrance of
the wise than of the fool forever,
Since all that now *is* will be forgotten
in the days to come.
And how does a wise *man* die?
As the fool!

17 Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun *was* distressing to me, for all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

18 Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also *is* vanity. 20 Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. 21 For there is a man whose labor *is* with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also *is* vanity and a great evil. 22 For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? 23 For all his days *are* sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.

24 Nothing *is* better for a man *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. 25 For who

us in." God takes us in for our own good and sets before us all the glories of heaven and earth. The Bible declares that "eye has not seen, nor ear heard" the amazing things God has in store for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:9). If not even Solomon in all his splendor could match the glory of the swaying lilies of the field, how much more splendor must God have for those with eyes to see? Just imagine what could be waiting while you breathe deep and take in what's here right now.

When the Bible declares that the mountains will sing and the rocks will cry out the message of God's love, it's merely another picture of the length, the height, the breadth, and the depth that God will go to lure us out of our suffocating shells and awake us to the wonder of what He has made. He promises beauty even from the ashes. Ecclesiastes assures us that "He has made everything beautiful in its time," and that "He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end" (3:11).

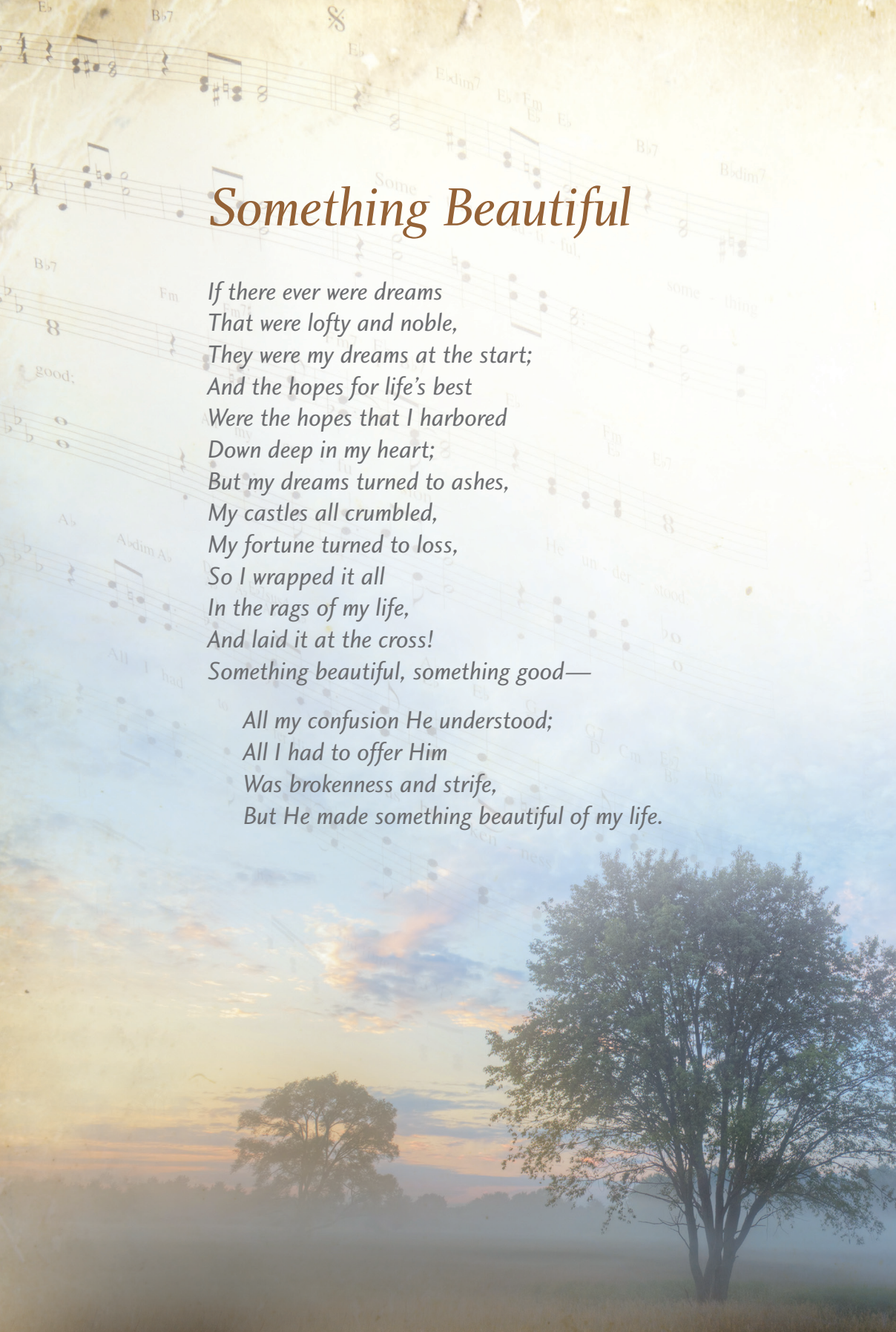
Heaven truly is found in every grain of sand and every wildflower because God's love and His hands have made every one of them. If He can't make us see it with the obvious, He'll set it before us with the miraculous.

It really is a beautiful sight.

Something Beautiful

If there ever were dreams
That were lofty and noble,
They were my dreams at the start;
And the hopes for life's best
Were the hopes that I harbored
Down deep in my heart;
But my dreams turned to ashes,
My castles all crumbled,
My fortune turned to loss,
So I wrapped it all
In the rags of my life,
And laid it at the cross!
Something beautiful, something good—

All my confusion He understood;
All I had to offer Him
Was brokenness and strife,
But He made something beautiful of my life.



He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

ECCLESIASTES 3:11

Suzanne, our firstborn, was always the "project kid" around our house. As long as we were making something, building something, painting something, cooking something, she was a contented child.

When she was almost three she was working one day with tempera paints at her little table in the corner of the family room. From the kitchen, out of the corner of my eye I watched as she confidently made great strokes of strong colors across the large sheet of paper that covered the whole surface of her table. She kept dipping into water and paint, as children love to do, when—on one trip from paint to paper—a big black blob dropped from her wet brush right into the middle of her picture. I watched her consider it, then try to make something that seemed intentional out of the blob. But because her paper was so soaked with too much too-wet paint, the black paint just spread out in little rivulets in all directions, invading the lovely yellows, reds, and greens.

I heard her feet pattering across the living room to the bathroom. She came back with a washcloth and tried to soak up some of the paint, rubbing the soggy paper with the end of the cloth. Soon she had rubbed a hole in the center of her picture, and the colors around it had turned an ugly umber.

It wasn't long before she was in tears. She picked up the drippy mess and brought it into the kitchen where I was working.

"Oh, Mommy," she sobbed, "I tried to make you something beautiful but just look! I dropped some paint." She heaved and caught her breath. "I tried to fix it, but it just got worse and now just look!"

I took the soggy painting and laid it on the counter, then knelt down beside her, took her in my arms, and let her cry out her anguish and disappointment. Finally, when she was spent and could hear me, I said, "I think there is one more big piece of paper in the craft closet. Let me check."

I went to where we kept supplies and, sure enough, there was a clean sheet left. You should have seen her face when she took the paper and skipped off to her table to begin again!

So often we are like Suzanne and her painting. We start out with noble dreams and aspirations. We harbor high hopes and lofty ambitions. We make up our minds not to make the mistakes our parents made, not to choose the paths our sisters chose, not to mess up as our brothers did.

And at first we seem to be in control of our lives. We determine to create our own healthy environments. We decide never again to be the victims of other people's choices. But somehow, as Robert Frost said, "Way leads on to way," and before we know it, we have passed our thirtieth birthdays and life is getting complicated. By forty we are beginning to realize that we've made some choices we regret, taken some turns we never thought we'd take. Oh, we try to fix it on our own, to cover what our hearts are telling us, but if the truth were known, we get up in the morning with a hole in our souls big enough to drive a Mack truck through. And in our rare honest moments we know we're no closer to our hopes and dreams than we were at the start.

Perhaps the best thing that can happen to us is to realize that we are not self-sufficient. Like a child we can take the mess we've made of things to a heavenly Father and say, "O Lord, I wanted so to make something beautiful of my life, but just look. . . ."

The amazing thing about Jesus is that He doesn't just patch up our lives. He doesn't just "make do" out of what we have left. He gives us a brand-new sheet, a clean slate to start over with. This miracle called "grace" is this: no matter when we realize we've made shabby gods and give control to Him, He makes us new creations. With God, it's never Plan B or second best. It's always Plan A. And, if we let Him, He'll make something beautiful of *our* lives.



can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I?[a] 26For *God* gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who *is* good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to *him who is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

Everything Has Its Time

3 To everything *there is* a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven:

2 A time to be born,
And a time to die;
A time to plant,
And a time to pluck *what is* planted;
3 A time to kill,
And a time to heal;
A time to break down,
And a time to build up;
4 A time to weep,
And a time to laugh;
A time to mourn,
And a time to dance;
5 A time to cast away stones,
And a time to gather stones;
A time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;
6 A time to gain,
And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
And a time to throw away;
7 A time to tear,
And a time to sew;
A time to keep silence,
And a time to speak;
8 A time to love,
And a time to hate;
A time of war,
And a time of peace.

The God-Given Task

9What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? 10I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. 11He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

12I know that nothing *is* better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, 13and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it *is* the gift of God.

14 I know that whatever God does,
It shall be forever.
Nothing can be added to it,
And nothing taken from it.
God does *it*, that men should fear
before Him.
15 That which is has already been,
And what is to be has already been;
And God requires an account of
what is past.

Injustice Seems to Prevail

16Moreover I saw under the sun:

In the place of judgment,
Wickedness *was* there;
And *in* the place of righteousness,
Iniquity *was* there.

17I said in my heart,

"God shall judge the righteous and the
wicked,
For *there is* a time there for every
purpose and for every work."

18I said in my heart, "Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are *like* animals." 19For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all *is* vanity. 20All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. 21Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?[a] 22So I perceived that nothing *is* better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that *is* his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?

4 Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun:

And look! The tears of the oppressed,
But they have no comforter—

2:25 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Syriac read *without Him.* **3:21** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *Who knows whether the spirit . . . goes upward, and whether . . . goes downward to the earth?*

On the side of their oppressors *there*
is power,
But they have no comforter.
2 Therefore I praised the dead who were
already dead,
More than the living who are still alive.
3 Yet, better than both *is he* who has
never existed,
Who has not seen the evil work that is
done under the sun.

The Vanity of Selfish Toil

4 Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

5 The fool folds his hands
And consumes his own flesh.
6 Better a handful *with* quietness
Than both hands full, *together with* toil
and grasping for the wind.

7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun:

8 There is one alone, without
companion:
He has neither son nor brother.
Yet *there is* no end to all his labors,
Nor is his eye satisfied with riches.
But he never asks,
"For whom do I toil and deprive
myself of good?"



KELLY NELON CLARK • Homecoming Artist, *The Nelons*

A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth. | ECCLESIASTES 7:1

I had seen my father's name, Rex Nelon, in many different locations. His name had appeared in magazines, marquees, billboards, television ads, and many other ways. This day would be a way I had never seen before. As we approached the door of the funeral home my heart began to sink. We walked to the room where my father's body lay. At the door stood a plaque, and on that plaque I read the name *Rex Nelon*. My knees began to buckle.

I couldn't believe the father that I adored was no longer upon this earth. It was devastating to me. God began to impress this scripture on my heart. As I meditated on this, I began to realize all the things in my father's death I could be thankful for. I didn't have to worry about where he was going to spend eternity. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt he was in heaven. He had been a great husband, father, and grandfather. When people gathered around his casket and at his service, there was no need to worry about the way he lived his life. He had lived his life being a good man with a good name. He had given his life and his talent to the Lord, and had served the Lord with all of it, even to the very end of his life. I really understood at that moment that he came into this world with nothing, but he left this world leaving us with his wonderful heritage, a sweet savor of his service to the Lord, and his precious good name. What more could I ask for in a father?

This also *is* vanity and a grave
misfortune.

The Value of a Friend

9 Two *are* better than one,
Because they have a good reward for
their labor.
10 For if they fall, one will lift up his
companion.
But woe to him *who is* alone when
he falls,
For *he has* no one to help him up.
11 Again, if two lie down together, they
will keep warm;
But how can one be warm *alone?*
12 Though one may be overpowered by
another, two can withstand him.
And a threefold cord is not quickly
broken.

Popularity Passes Away

13 Better a poor and wise youth
Than an old and foolish king who will
be admonished no more.
14 For he comes out of prison to be king,
Although he was born poor in his
kingdom.
15 I saw all the living who walk under
the sun;
They were with the second youth who
stands in his place.
16 *There was* no end of all the people over
whom he was made king;
Yet those who come afterward will not
rejoice in him.
Surely this also *is* vanity and grasping
for the wind.

Fear God, Keep Your Vows

5 Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

2 Do not be rash with your mouth,
And let not your heart utter anything
hastily before God.
For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth;
Therefore let your words be few.
3 For a dream comes through much
activity,
And a fool's voice *is known* by *his* many
words.
4 When you make a vow to God, do
not delay to pay it;
For *He has* no pleasure in fools.
Pay what you have vowed—
5 Better not to vow than to vow and
not pay.

6 Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger *of God* that it *was* an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse[a] and destroy the work of your hands? 7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there is* also vanity. But fear God.

The Vanity of Gain and Honor

8 If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.
9 Moreover the profit of the land is for all; *even* the king is served from the field.

10 He who loves silver will not be satisfied
with silver;
Nor he who loves abundance,
with increase.
This also *is* vanity.

11 When goods increase,
They increase who eat them;
So what profit have the owners
Except to see *them* with their eyes?

12 The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet,
Whether he eats little or much;
But the abundance of the rich will not
permit him to sleep.

13 There is a severe evil *which* I have seen
under the sun:
Riches kept for their owner to his hurt.
14 But those riches perish through
misfortune;
When he begets a son, *there is* nothing
in his hand.
15 As he came from his mother's womb,
naked shall he return,
To go as he came;
And he shall take nothing from his labor
Which he may carry away in his hand.

5:6 [a]Literally *voice*

16 And this also *is* a severe evil—
Just exactly as he came, so shall he go.
And what profit has he who has
labored for the wind?
17 All his days he also eats in darkness,
And *he has* much sorrow and sickness
and anger.

18 Here is what I have seen: *It is* good and fitting *for one* to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it *is* his heritage. 19 As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this *is* the gift of God. 20 For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps *him* busy with the joy of his heart.

6 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it *is* common among men:
2 A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil affliction.

3 If a man begets a hundred *children* and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say *that* a stillborn child *is* better than he— 4 for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. 5 Though it has not seen the sun or known *anything,* this has more rest than that man, 6 even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place?



JASON CLARK • Homecoming Artist, *The Nelons*

Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart. | ECCLESIASTES 7:2

What a strange, unorthodox bit of wisdom from the world's wisest man! He is saying that we are better off going to a funeral or being amongst those who are in mourning than going out with some friends to dinner and celebration. I never fully understood this principle until a couple of years ago.

While Kelly, Amber, and I were serving as worship leaders in a congregation near Atlanta, Georgia, we became very fond of a sweet couple who were regular attendees. Many Sunday mornings I would look out into the congregation and see Grady Clark and his wife, Jessi, raising their hands in worship while the tears of joy would roll down their faces as we basked in the sweet presence of the Lord. Grady especially loved to hear Amber sing "Jesus I Heard You Had a Big House," written by Bill and Gloria Gaither. Many Sundays he would ask me with a smile if I was taking requests, and I always knew that request was "Big House."

Grady was soon diagnosed with inoperable cancer and his health rapidly began to decline. Grady would continue to attend church even through

7 All the labor of man *is* for his mouth,
And yet the soul is not satisfied.
8 For what more has the wise *man* than the fool?
What does the poor man have,
Who knows *how* to walk before the living?
9 Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire.
This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

10 Whatever one is, he has been named already,
For it is known that he *is* man;
And he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.
11 Since there are many things that increase vanity,
How *is* man the better?

12 For who knows what *is* good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?

The Value of Practical Wisdom

7 A good name *is* better than precious ointment,
And the day of death than the day of one's birth;
2 Better to go to the house of mourning
Than to go to the house of feasting,
For that *is* the end of all men;
And the living will take *it* to heart.
3 Sorrow *is* better than laughter,
For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.

his most difficult treatments. As hospice began to settle in at Grady and Jessi's home to prepare him for his last few days, it became increasingly difficult for Grady to attend church. During a visit Grady shared with me, "I just want to be able to come to church one more time." He told me how much the music would lift his spirits, and that was evident by the expression upon his face. I shared this news with our pastor. The very next church service our pastor stepped up to the pulpit after the opening song and told our church family of Grady's last wish to attend a worship service one more time. He said, "Obviously Grady is unable to come to church so we are taking church to him." We loaded the entire congregation into several buses and headed to Grady's home. As hundreds of his church family huddled together on his front lawn, Grady's nurses carried his hospice bed onto the porch. Kelly, Amber, and I stood beside Grady, holding his hand singing every favorite song that he ever told me about! Grady, now on his deathbed, could barely speak but that sweet smile was still on his face, and as Amber closed this powerful worship service with "Jesus I Heard You Had a Big House," those tears began to flow. We could do nothing but just stand still in the presence of the Lord.

That was indeed Grady's last worship service on this side of heaven! He passed away shortly thereafter. But I still look back at that time of mourning as one of the most powerful, genuine, spirit-filled moments I have ever witnessed. Solomon was right after all. It is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting, for that is where the living will take it to heart.

4 The heart of the wise *is* in the house of
mourning,
But the heart of fools *is* in the house
of mirth.

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.
ECCLESIASTES 7:5

5 *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise
Than for a man to hear the song of fools.
6 For like the crackling of thorns under
a pot,
So *is* the laughter of the fool.
This also is vanity.
7 Surely oppression destroys a wise
man's reason,
And a bribe debases the heart.

8 The end of a thing *is* better than its
beginning;
The patient in spirit *is* better than the
proud in spirit.
9 Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry,
For anger rests in the bosom of fools.
10 Do not say,
"Why were the former days better than
these?"
For you do not inquire wisely
concerning this.

11 Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance,
And profitable to those who see the sun.
12 For wisdom *is* a defense *as* money *is* a
defense,
But the excellence of knowledge *is that*
wisdom gives life to those who have it.

13 Consider the work of God;
For who can make straight what He
has made crooked?
14 In the day of prosperity be joyful,
But in the day of adversity consider:
Surely God has appointed the one as
well as the other,
So that man can find out nothing *that*
will come after him.

15 I have seen everything in my days of vanity:
There is a just *man* who perishes in
his righteousness,
And there is a wicked *man* who
prolongs *life* in his wickedness.

16 Do not be overly righteous,
Nor be overly wise:
Why should you destroy yourself?
17 Do not be overly wicked,
Nor be foolish:
Why should you die before your time?
18 *It is* good that you grasp this,
And also not remove your hand from
the other;
For he who fears God will escape
them all.

19 Wisdom strengthens the wise
More than ten rulers of the city.

20 For *there is* not a just man on earth
who does good
And does not sin.

21 Also do not take to heart everything
people say,
Lest you hear your servant cursing you.
22 For many times, also, your own heart
has known
That even you have cursed others.

23 All this I have proved by wisdom.
I said, "I will be wise";
But it *was* far from me.
24 As for that which is far off and
exceedingly deep,
Who can find it out?
25 I applied my heart to know,
To search and seek out wisdom and
the reason *of things,*
To know the wickedness of folly,
Even of foolishness *and* madness.
26 And I find more bitter than death
The woman whose heart *is* snares
and nets,
Whose hands *are* fetters.
He who pleases God shall escape
from her,
But the sinner shall be trapped by her.

27 "Here is what I have found," says the
Preacher,
"*Adding* one thing to the other to find
out the reason,

Renascence

GLORIA GAITHER

There's no darkness quite so black
as darkness seen by eyes that
never open,
have not seen the sun.
Life to the unborn is filled with little
but a void. I know
for I am one
yet unborn.
Oh, I am one!

Yet something deep inside me
keeps on reaching
through the darkness,
pushing back despair,
black despair—
hope is there.

The seed of the divine, the
simple, timeless
knowing there must be a place
I could be growing,
is compelling me,
expelling me . . .

Longing for the dawning of
the soul of me,
I risk the pain of recreation
and the agony
of my nativity.
I leave the cozy womb of my mortality,
rushing headlong to eternity
willingly, willingly!

And I'm alive again!
I'm a child again!
I am walking unashamed
and naked
in a brand new world,
and I'm wide-eyed again!
Clean inside again!
And I can see!
Oh,
I can see!

28 Which my soul still seeks but I
cannot find:
One man among a thousand I
have found,
But a woman among all these I have
not found.
29 Truly, this only I have found:
That God made man upright,
But they have sought out many schemes."

8 Who *is* like a wise *man?*
And who knows the interpretation of
a thing?
A man's wisdom makes his face shine,
And the sternness of his face is changed.

Obey Authorities for God's Sake

2 I *say,* "Keep the king's commandment
for the sake of your oath to God. 3 Do not
be hasty to go from his presence. Do not
take your stand for an evil thing, for he
does whatever pleases him."

4 Where the word of a king *is, there*
is power;
And who may say to him, "What
are you doing?"
5 He who keeps his command will
experience nothing harmful;
And a wise man's heart discerns both
time and judgment,
6 Because for every matter there is a
time and judgment,
Though the misery of man increases
greatly.
7 For he does not know what will happen;
So who can tell him when it will occur?
8 No one has power over the spirit to
retain the spirit,
And no one has power in the day
of death.
There is no release from that war,
And wickedness will not deliver those
who are given to it.

9 All this I have seen, and applied my
heart to every work that is done under the
sun: *There is* a time in which one man rules
over another to his own hurt.

Death Comes to All

10 Then I saw the wicked buried, who had
come and gone from the place of holiness,
and they were forgotten[a] in the city where
they had so done. This also *is* vanity.
11 Because the sentence against an evil work
is not executed speedily, therefore the heart
of the sons of men is fully set in them to
do evil. 12 Though a sinner does evil a hun-
dred *times,* and his *days* are prolonged, yet
I surely know that it will be well with those
who fear God, who fear before Him. 13 But
it will not be well with the wicked; nor will
he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow,
because he does not fear before God.
14 There is a vanity which occurs on
earth, that there are just *men* to whom
it happens according to the work of the
wicked; again, there are wicked *men* to
whom it happens according to the work of
the righteous. I said that this also *is* vanity.
15 So I commended enjoyment, because
a man has nothing better under the sun
than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will
remain with him in his labor *all* the days of
his life which God gives him under the sun.
16 When I applied my heart to know wis-
dom and to see the business that is done on
earth, even though one sees no sleep day
or night, 17 then I saw all the work of God,
that a man cannot find out the work that
is done under the sun. For though a man
labors to discover *it,* yet he will not find *it;*
moreover, though a wise *man* attempts to
know *it,* he will not be able to find *it.*

9 For I considered all this in my heart,
so that I could declare it all: that the
righteous and the wise and their works *are*
in the hand of God. People know neither
love nor hatred *by* anything *they see* before
them. 2 All things *come* alike to all:

One event *happens* to the righteous
and the wicked;
To the good,[a] the clean, and the
unclean;
To him who sacrifices and him who
does not sacrifice.
As is the good, so *is* the sinner;
He who takes an oath as *he* who fears
an oath.

3 This *is* an evil in all that is done under the
sun: that one thing *happens* to all. Truly the

8:10 [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *praised.*
9:2 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *good and bad.*

hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness *is* in their hearts while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead. 4But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

5 For the living know that they will die;
But the dead know nothing,
And they have no more reward,
For the memory of them is forgotten.
6 Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished;
Nevermore will they have a share
In anything done under the sun.

7 Go, eat your bread with joy,
And drink your wine with a merry heart;
For God has already accepted your works.
8 Let your garments always be white,
And let your head lack no oil.

9Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that *is* your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.
10Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with your might; for *there is* no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.
11I returned and saw under the sun that—

The race *is* not to the swift,
Nor the battle to the strong,
Nor bread to the wise,
Nor riches to men of understanding,
Nor favor to men of skill;
But time and chance happen to them all.
12 For man also does not know his time:
Like fish taken in a cruel net,
Like birds caught in a snare,
So the sons of men *are* snared in an evil time,
When it falls suddenly upon them.

Wisdom Superior to Folly

13This wisdom I have also seen under the sun, and it *seemed* great to me: 14*There was* a little city with few men in it; and a great king came against it, besieged it, and built great snares[a] around it. 15Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that same poor man.
16Then I said:

"Wisdom *is* better than strength.
Nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *is* despised,
And his words are not heard.
17 Words of the wise, *spoken* quietly,
should be heard
Rather than the shout of a ruler of fools.
18 Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war;
But one sinner destroys much good."

10 Dead flies putrefy[a] the perfumer's ointment,
And cause it to give off a foul odor;
So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom *and* honor.
2 A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand,
But a fool's heart at his left.
3 Even when a fool walks along the way,
He lacks wisdom,
And he shows everyone *that* he *is* a fool.
4 If the spirit of the ruler rises against you,
Do not leave your post;
For conciliation pacifies great offenses.

5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun,
As an error proceeding from the ruler:
6 Folly is set in great dignity,
While the rich sit in a lowly place.
7 I have seen servants on horses,
While princes walk on the ground like servants.

8 He who digs a pit will fall into it,
And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent.
9 He who quarries stones may be hurt by them,
And he who splits wood may be endangered by it.
10 If the ax is dull,
And one does not sharpen the edge,
Then he must use more strength;
But wisdom brings success.

11 A serpent may bite when *it is* not charmed;

9:14 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *bulwarks*. **10:1** [a]Targum and Vulgate omit *putrefy*.

The babbler is no different.
12 The words of a wise man's mouth *are* gracious,
But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up;
13 The words of his mouth begin with foolishness,
And the end of his talk *is* raving madness.
14 A fool also multiplies words.
No man knows what is to be;
Who can tell him what will be after him?
15 The labor of fools wearies them,
For they do not even know how to go to the city!

16 Woe to you, O land, when your king *is* a child,
And your princes feast in the morning!
17 Blessed *are* you, O land, when your king *is* the son of nobles,
And your princes feast at the proper time—
For strength and not for drunkenness!
18 Because of laziness the building decays,
And through idleness of hands the house leaks.
19 A feast is made for laughter,
And wine makes merry;
But money answers everything.

20 Do not curse the king, even in your thought;
Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom;
For a bird of the air may carry your voice,
And a bird in flight may tell the matter.

The Value of Diligence

11 Cast your bread upon the waters,
For you will find it after many days.
2 Give a serving to seven, and also to eight,
For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.

3 If the clouds are full of rain,
They empty *themselves* upon the earth;
And if a tree falls to the south or the north,
In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.
4 He who observes the wind will not sow,
And he who regards the clouds will not reap.

5 As you do not know what *is* the way of the wind,[a]
Or how the bones *grow* in the womb of her who is with child,
So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.
6 In the morning sow your seed,
And in the evening do not withhold your hand;
For you do not know which will prosper,
Either this or that,
Or whether both alike *will be* good.

7 Truly the light is sweet,
And *it is* pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun;
8 But if a man lives many years
And rejoices in them all,
Yet let him remember the days of darkness,
For they will be many.
All that is coming *is* vanity.

Seek God in Early Life

9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,
And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth;
Walk in the ways of your heart,
And in the sight of your eyes;
But know that for all these
God will bring you into judgment.
10 Therefore remove sorrow from your heart,
And put away evil from your flesh,
For childhood and youth *are* vanity.

12 Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth,
Before the difficult days come,
And the years draw near when you say,
"I have no pleasure in them":
2 While the sun and the light,
The moon and the stars,
Are not darkened,
And the clouds do not return after the rain;
3 In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,
And the strong men bow down;

11:5 [a]Or *spirit*

When the doors are shut in the streets, and the sound of grinding is low; when one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of music are brought low.

ECCLESIASTES 12:4

When the grinders cease because they are few,
And those that look through the windows grow dim;
4 When the doors are shut in the streets,
And the sound of grinding is low;
When one rises up at the sound of a bird,
And all the daughters of music are brought low.
5 Also they are afraid of height,
And of terrors in the way;
When the almond tree blossoms,
The grasshopper is a burden,
And desire fails.
For man goes to his eternal home,
And the mourners go about the streets.

6 *Remember your Creator* before the silver cord is loosed,[a]
Or the golden bowl is broken,
Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain,
Or the wheel broken at the well.
7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,
And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

8 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher,
"All *is* vanity."

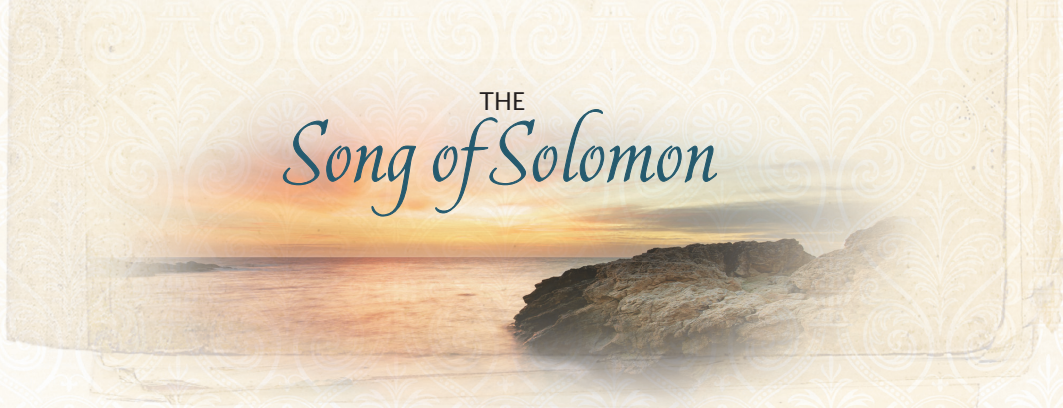
The Whole Duty of Man

9 And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out *and* set in order many proverbs. 10 The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and *what was* written *was* upright—words of truth. 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars[a] are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. 12 And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books *there is* no end, and much study *is* wearisome to the flesh.

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man's all.
14 For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.

12:6 [a]Following Qere and Targum; Kethib reads *removed;* Septuagint and Vulgate read *broken.* **12:11** [a]Literally *masters of the assemblies*



THE Song of Solomon

1 The song of songs, which *is* Solomon's.

The Banquet

THE SHULAMITE[a]

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—
For your[b] love *is* better than wine.
3 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments,
Your name *is* ointment poured forth;
Therefore the virgins love you.
4 Draw me away!

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

We will run after you.[a]

THE SHULAMITE

The king has brought me into his chambers.

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

We will be glad and rejoice in you.[b]

We will remember your[c] love more than wine.

THE SHULAMITE

Rightly do they love you.[d]

5 I *am* dark, but lovely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,
Like the tents of Kedar,
Like the curtains of Solomon.
6 Do not look upon me, because I *am* dark,
Because the sun has tanned me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
They made me the keeper of the vineyards,
But my own vineyard I have not kept.

(TO HER BELOVED)

7 Tell me, O you whom I love,
Where you feed *your flock,*
Where you make *it* rest at noon.
For why should I be as one who veils herself[a]
By the flocks of your companions?

THE BELOVED

8 If you do not know, O fairest among women,
Follow in the footsteps of the flock,
And feed your little goats
Beside the shepherds' tents.
9 I have compared you, my love,
To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.
10 Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,
Your neck with chains *of gold.*

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

11 We will make you[a] ornaments of gold
With studs of silver.

THE SHULAMITE

12 While the king *is* at his table,
My spikenard sends forth its fragrance.
13 A bundle of myrrh *is* my beloved to me,
That lies all night between my breasts.
14 My beloved *is* to me a cluster of henna *blooms*
In the vineyards of En Gedi.

THE BELOVED

15 Behold, you *are* fair, my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!
You *have* dove's eyes.

THE SHULAMITE

16 Behold, you *are* handsome, my beloved!
Yes, pleasant!
Also our bed *is* green.

1:2 [a]A young woman from the town of Shulam or Shunem (compare 6:13). The speaker and audience are identified according to the number, gender, and person of the Hebrew words. Occasionally the identity is not certain. [b]Masculine singular, that is, the Beloved **1:4** [a]Masculine singular, that is, the Beloved [b]Feminine singular, that is, the Shulamite [c]Masculine singular, that is, the Beloved [d]Masculine singular, that is, the Beloved **1:7** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *wanders.* **1:11** [a]Feminine singular, that is, the Shulamite

17 The beams of our houses *are* cedar,
And our rafters of fir.
2 I *am* the rose of Sharon,
And the lily of the valleys.

THE BELOVED
2 Like a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.

THE SHULAMITE
3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods,
So *is* my beloved among the sons.
I sat down in his shade with great delight,
And his fruit *was* sweet to my taste.

THE SHULAMITE TO THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM
4 He brought me to the banqueting house,
And his banner over me *was* love.
5 Sustain me with cakes of raisins,
Refresh me with apples,
For I *am* lovesick.

6 His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.
7 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

The Beloved's Request

THE SHULAMITE
8 The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he comes
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.
9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Behold, he stands behind our wall;
He is looking through the windows,
Gazing through the lattice.

10 My beloved spoke, and said to me:
"Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away.
11 For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over *and* gone.
12 The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing has come,
And the voice of the turtledove
Is heard in our land.
13 The fig tree puts forth her green figs,
And the vines *with* the tender grapes
Give a *good* smell.
Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away!

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our land.
SONG OF SOLOMON 2:12

14 "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret *places* of the cliff,
Let me see your face,
Let me hear your voice;
For your voice *is* sweet,
And your face *is* lovely."

HER BROTHERS
15 Catch us the foxes,
The little foxes that spoil the vines,
For our vines *have* tender grapes.

THE SHULAMITE
16 My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his.
He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.

(TO HER BELOVED)
17 Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved,
And be like a gazelle
Or a young stag
Upon the mountains of Bether.[a]

A Troubled Night

THE SHULAMITE
3 By night on my bed I sought the one I love;
I sought him, but I did not find him.
2 "I will rise now," *I said,*
"And go about the city;
In the streets and in the squares
I will seek the one I love."
I sought him, but I did not find him.
3 The watchmen who go about the city found me;
I said,
"Have you seen the one I love?"

2:17 [a]Literally *Separation*

I Am Loved

All I had to bring were imperfections;
There was so much more I lacked than I possessed.
I could hardly comprehend His offer:
I'd bring what I had, He'd bring the rest.

I said, "If You knew, You wouldn't want me;
My scars are hidden by this face I wear."
He said, "My child, My scars go deeper;
It was love for you that put them there."

Forgiven—I repeat it—I'm forgiven!
Clean before my Lord I freely stand.
Forgiven, I can dare forgive my brother;
Forgiven, I reach out to take your hand.

I am loved! I am loved!
I can risk loving you,
For the One who knows me best loves me most.
I am loved, you are loved,
Won't you please take my hand?
We are free to love each other, we are loved.



He brought me to the banqueting house,
and his banner over me was love . . . .
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:4, 13

"Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so": we sing it almost before we can walk. Preachers preach it, parents teach it, TV evangelists tell us, "God loves you!" The most memorized verse in the Bible is probably John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. . . ." As children we learn to quote it. Yet the world seems to be dying from love starvation. Few of us seem to be able to internalize this simple truth: *Jesus loves me*. God's Book is full of love stories that tell me so. An old rugged cross tells me so. Yet when we can't seem to love ourselves, it is hard for us to believe that anyone else could love us, especially if that Someone knows all there is to know about us.

The summer before Bill and I were married, I went home to Battle Creek, Michigan, to work at Kellogg's to earn enough money to return to Anderson University that fall. On weekends Bill would drive up to see me. When I got out of work at midnight on Friday, he would be waiting for me in the Kellogg's parking lot. I'd come out in my ugly green uniform, a few cornflakes still stuck in my hair, and climb into his red convertible.

One night when I came out, he handed me an engagement ring. It wasn't much of a ring, because he didn't much like diamonds. But I wanted a ring so my friends in Michigan could see that we were engaged. When we got married in December, he gave me the matching wedding band, but he never liked those rings. He would always say something like, "Those are the dumbest-looking rings! Now, what I really like is a plain gold band. A plain band looks so . . . *married*."

One evening, after we'd been married two or three years, we were at Kmart. Bill went to the recording department, as he always did, while I shopped for what we needed. That night I saw they were selling plain gold bands at the jewelry counter for $13.95—a "blue-light special." (That was a long time ago!) I had some grocery money left, so I bought a plain gold band, took off my other rings, and

put the band on my finger. I didn't say anything about it until we got to the car.

Bill pulled out his new recording and said, "How do you like this?" "Fine," I answered. "How do you like this?" I held up my hand with the plain gold ring on my finger. "I like that!" he said. "It just looks so married." So, for seventeen years I wore the plain gold band I bought myself at Kmart for $13.95. (I don't even know if that's legal!)

In 1982, our group took a trip to the Holy Land just after Thanksgiving. The next February, one night when our family sat down for supper, instead of praying the blessing on our food, Bill said, "I want everybody to be quiet. I have a presentation to make." He took out a small blue box and handed it to me. I opened it and found inside a most unusual gold ring with Hebrew writing engraved around it.

"I had that made for you in Jerusalem," Bill said. "It is eighteen-karat gold and says, 'Arise, my love, and come away,' from the Song of Solomon." I couldn't believe it! He had thought of this all on his own. He even paid for it! Of course, I don't read Hebrew. It could say, "Go away, my love," for all I know. Or it could say, "Kmart."

But I believe him and I love my ring. I put it right on and have worn it ever since. Now, he didn't say I had to wear it. I could have said, "I can't believe you really want me to have this ring" or "I don't know what you're trying to pull. I paid $13.95 for this ring on my finger, and you're not going to get me to take it off. No siree!"

But that would have been crazy, don't you think? Especially when I had an eighteen-karat-gold, hand-engraved invitation to be loved by this wonderful man who knows me pretty well. He knows all my failures and my shortcomings. He knows what I can and cannot do. He knows all my bulges and figure flaws . . . and he loves me anyway.

And Jesus says to us, "I come that you might know life abundant." He wrote His love in His own blood on a cross. Then we say, "What will I have to give up?" We hang on to our little Kmart lives; we're so suspicious, so fearful of letting go, while He holds out His arms and invites us to share in His "unsearchable riches."

If only we could all believe that it isn't about our being worthy. It's about our being loved. If we could dare to believe that we are loved, it wouldn't matter what degrading thing anyone else had ever said to chip away at our self-esteem or to tear down our sense of worth. If we are loved, if we are valued by the God of the universe Himself, no one else's opinion matters. Being loved by Him whose opinion matters most gives us the security to risk loving too, even loving ourselves.



4 Scarcely had I passed by them,
When I found the one I love.
I held him and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him to the house
of my mother,
And into the chamber of her who
conceived me.

5 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the
field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

The Coming of Solomon

THE SHULAMITE

6 Who *is* this coming out of the wilderness
Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and
frankincense,
With all the merchant's fragrant
powders?
7 Behold, it *is* Solomon's couch,
With sixty valiant men around it,
Of the valiant of Israel.
8 They all hold swords,
Being expert in war.
Every man *has* his sword on his thigh
Because of fear in the night.

9 Of the wood of Lebanon
Solomon the King
Made himself a palanquin:[a]
10 He made its pillars *of* silver,
Its support *of* gold,
Its seat *of* purple,
Its interior paved *with* love
By the daughters of Jerusalem.
11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion,
And see King Solomon with the crown
With which his mother crowned him
On the day of his wedding,
The day of the gladness of his heart.

The Bridegroom Praises the Bride

THE BELOVED

4 Behold, you *are* fair, my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!
You *have* dove's eyes behind your veil.
Your hair *is* like a flock of goats,
Going down from Mount Gilead.
2 Your teeth *are* like a flock of shorn *sheep*
Which have come up from the washing,
Every one of which bears twins,
And none *is* barren among them.
3 Your lips *are* like a strand of scarlet,
And your mouth is lovely.
Your temples behind your veil
Are like a piece of pomegranate.
4 Your neck *is* like the tower of David,
Built for an armory,
On which hang a thousand bucklers,
All shields of mighty men.
5 Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle,
Which feed among the lilies.

6 Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee away,
I will go my way to the mountain
of myrrh
And to the hill of frankincense.

7 You *are* all fair, my love,
And *there is* no spot in you.
8 Come with me from Lebanon,*my* spouse,
With me from Lebanon.
Look from the top of Amana,
From the top of Senir and Hermon,
From the lions' dens,
From the mountains of the leopards.

9 You have ravished my heart,
My sister, *my* spouse;
You have ravished my heart
With one *look* of your eyes,
With one link of your necklace.
10 How fair is your love,
My sister, *my* spouse!
How much better than wine is your love,
And the scent of your perfumes
Than all spices!
11 Your lips, O *my* spouse,
Drip as the honeycomb;
Honey and milk *are* under your tongue;
And the fragrance of your garments
Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

12 A garden enclosed
Is my sister, *my* spouse,
A spring shut up,
A fountain sealed.
13 Your plants *are* an orchard of
pomegranates
With pleasant fruits,
Fragrant henna with spikenard,

3:9 [a]A portable enclosed chair

14 Spikenard and saffron,
Calamus and cinnamon,
With all trees of frankincense,
Myrrh and aloes,
With all the chief spices—
15 A fountain of gardens,
A well of living waters,
And streams from Lebanon.

THE SHULAMITE
16 Awake, O north *wind,*
And come, O south!
Blow upon my garden,
That its spices may flow out.
Let my beloved come to his garden
And eat its pleasant fruits.

THE BELOVED
5 I have come to my garden, my sister,
my spouse;
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice;
I have eaten my honeycomb with my
honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk.

(TO HIS FRIENDS)
Eat, O friends!
Drink, yes, drink deeply,
O beloved ones!

The Shulamite's Troubled Evening

THE SHULAMITE
2 I sleep, but my heart is awake;
It is the voice of my beloved!
He knocks, *saying,*
"Open for me, my sister, my love,
My dove, my perfect one;
For my head is covered with dew,
My locks with the drops of the
night."

3 I have taken off my robe;
How can I put it on *again?*
I have washed my feet;
How can I defile them?
4 My beloved put his hand
By the latch *of the door,*
And my heart yearned for him.
5 I arose to open for my beloved,
And my hands dripped *with* myrrh,
My fingers with liquid myrrh,
On the handles of the lock.
6 I opened for my beloved,
But my beloved had turned away *and*
was gone.
My heart leaped up when he spoke.
I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no
answer.
7 The watchmen who went about the
city found me.
They struck me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls
Took my veil away from me.
8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
If you find my beloved,
That you tell him I *am* lovesick!

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM
9 What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,
O fairest among women?
What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,
That you so charge us?

THE SHULAMITE
10 My beloved *is* white and ruddy,
Chief among ten thousand.
11 His head *is like* the finest gold;
His locks *are* wavy,
And black as a raven.
12 His eyes *are* like doves
By the rivers of waters,
Washed with milk,
And fitly set.
13 His cheeks *are* like a bed of spices,
Banks of scented herbs.
His lips *are* lilies,
Dripping liquid myrrh.

14 His hands *are* rods of gold
Set with beryl.
His body *is* carved ivory
Inlaid *with* sapphires.
15 His legs *are* pillars of marble
Set on bases of fine gold.
His countenance *is* like Lebanon,
Excellent as the cedars.
16 His mouth *is* most sweet,
Yes, he *is* altogether lovely.
This *is* my beloved,
And this *is* my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem!

The Daughters of Jerusalem

6 Where has your beloved gone,
O fairest among women?
Where has your beloved turned aside,
That we may seek him with you?

The Shulamite

2 My beloved has gone to his garden,
To the beds of spices,
To feed *his flock* in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
3 I *am* my beloved's,
And my beloved *is* mine.
He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.

Praise of the Shulamite's Beauty

The Beloved

4 O my love, you *are as* beautiful as Tirzah,
Lovely as Jerusalem,
Awesome as *an army* with banners!
5 Turn your eyes away from me,
For they have overcome me.
Your hair *is* like a flock of goats
Going down from Gilead.
6 Your teeth *are* like a flock of sheep
Which have come up from the washing;
Every one bears twins,
And none *is* barren among them.
7 Like a piece of pomegranate
Are your temples behind your veil.

8 There are sixty queens
And eighty concubines,
And virgins without number.
9 My dove, my perfect one,
Is the only one,
The only one of her mother,
The favorite of the one who bore her.
The daughters saw her
And called her blessed,
The queens and the concubines,
And they praised her.

10 Who is she who looks forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
Awesome as *an army* with banners?

The Shulamite

11 I went down to the garden of nuts
To see whether the vine had budded
And the pomegranates had bloomed.
12 Before I was even aware,
My soul had made me
As the chariots of my noble people.[a]

The Beloved and His Friends

13 Return, return, O Shulamite;
Return, return, that we may look upon you!

The Shulamite

What would you see in the Shulamite—
As it were, the dance of the two camps?[a]

Expressions of Praise

The Beloved

7 How beautiful are your feet in sandals,
O prince's daughter!
The curves of your thighs *are* like jewels,
The work of the hands of a skillful workman.
2 Your navel *is* a rounded goblet;
It lacks no blended beverage.
Your waist *is* a heap of wheat
Set about with lilies.
3 Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle.
4 Your neck *is* like an ivory tower,
Your eyes *like* the pools in Heshbon
By the gate of Bath Rabbim.
Your nose *is* like the tower of Lebanon
Which looks toward Damascus.
5 Your head *crowns* you like *Mount* Carmel,
And the hair of your head *is* like purple;
A king *is* held captive by *your* tresses.

6 How fair and how pleasant you are,
O love, with your delights!
7 This stature of yours is like a palm tree,
And your breasts *like* its clusters.
8 I said, "I will go up to the palm tree,
I will take hold of its branches."
Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
The fragrance of your breath like apples,
9 And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.

The Shulamite

The wine goes *down* smoothly for my beloved,

6:12 [a]Hebrew *Ammi Nadib* **6:13** [a]Hebrew *Mahanaim*

Moving gently the lips of sleepers.[a]
10 I *am* my beloved's,
And his desire *is* toward me.

11 Come, my beloved,
Let us go forth to the field;
Let us lodge in the villages.
12 Let us get up early to the vineyards;
Let us see if the vine has budded,
Whether the grape blossoms are open,
And the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.
13 The mandrakes give off a fragrance,
And at our gates *are* pleasant *fruits,*
All manner, new and old,
Which I have laid up for you, my beloved.

8 Oh, that you were like my brother,
Who nursed at my mother's breasts!
If I should find you outside,
I would kiss you;
I would not be despised.
2 I would lead you *and* bring you
Into the house of my mother,
She *who* used to instruct me.
I would cause you to drink of spiced wine,
Of the juice of my pomegranate.

(To the Daughters of Jerusalem)
3 His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.
4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

Love Renewed in Lebanon

A Relative
5 Who *is* this coming up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Who is this coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; there she who bore you brought you forth. | SONG OF SOLOMON 8:5

The bride in the Song of Solomon has come a long way in her relationship to her groom by the time we get to the eighth chapter. In the early part of the book, the bride was desperately clinging to her groom, fearing that if she dared to release her grip, he would escape and go away from her. It was a very unstable relationship at first. She needed to be affirmed at every turn. One would think that clinging to the groom is a good thing, but not if it is in fear and desperation of losing him. At the end of the love song we see the bride leaning on her beloved. Leaning is better than clinging because there is no fear in leaning that he will run away. The passage is even more powerful because it pictures the bride coming out of the wilderness, leaning on her groom. I have known Christians who have a shining testimony of union with Christ. They have been through difficult and impossible times, and they come out of their wilderness, leaning on Jesus. Nothing is more beautiful to my heart than to watch a Christian come up from the wilderness leaning on the Lord!

I awakened you under the apple tree.
There your mother brought you forth;
There she *who* bore you brought
you forth.

THE SHULAMITE TO HER BELOVED

6 Set me as a seal upon your heart,
As a seal upon your arm;
For love *is as* strong as death,
Jealousy *as* cruel as the grave;[a]
Its flames *are* flames of fire,
A most vehement flame.[b]

7 Many waters cannot quench love,
Nor can the floods drown it.
If a man would give for love
All the wealth of his house,
It would be utterly despised.

THE SHULAMITE'S BROTHERS

8 We have a little sister,
And she has no breasts.
What shall we do for our sister
In the day when she is spoken for?
9 If she *is* a wall,
We will build upon her
A battlement of silver;
And if she *is* a door,
We will enclose her
With boards of cedar.

THE SHULAMITE

10 I *am* a wall,
And my breasts like towers;
Then I became in his eyes
As one who found peace.
11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon;
He leased the vineyard to keepers;
Everyone was to bring for its fruit
A thousand silver *coins*.

(TO SOLOMON)

12 My own vineyard *is* before me.
You, O Solomon, *may have* a thousand,
And those who tend its fruit two
hundred.

THE BELOVED

13 You who dwell in the gardens,
The companions listen for your voice—
Let me hear it!

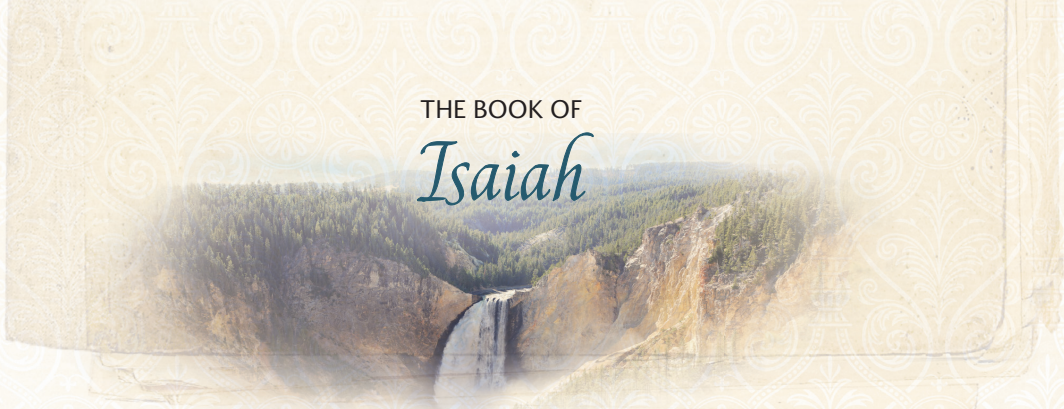
THE SHULAMITE

14 Make haste, my beloved,
And be like a gazelle
Or a young stag
On the mountains of spices.

7:9 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *lips and teeth*. **8:6** [a]Or *Sheol* [b]Literally *A flame of* YAH (a poetic form of *YHWH, the* LORD)

THE BOOK OF

Isaiah



1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

The Wickedness of Judah

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!
For the LORD has spoken:
"I have nourished and brought up children,
And they have rebelled against Me;
3 The ox knows its owner
And the donkey its master's crib;
But Israel does not know,
My people do not consider."

4 Alas, sinful nation,
A people laden with iniquity,
A brood of evildoers,
Children who are corrupters!
They have forsaken the LORD,
They have provoked to anger
The Holy One of Israel,
They have turned away backward.

5 Why should you be stricken again?
You will revolt more and more.
The whole head is sick,
And the whole heart faints.
6 From the sole of the foot even to the head,
There is no soundness in it,
But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores;
They have not been closed or bound up,
Or soothed with ointment.

7 Your country *is* desolate,
Your cities *are* burned with fire;
Strangers devour your land in your presence;
And *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.
8 So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard,
As a hut in a garden of cucumbers,
As a besieged city.
9 Unless the LORD of hosts
Had left to us a very small remnant,
We would have become like Sodom,
We would have been made like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD,
You rulers of Sodom;
Give ear to the law of our God,
You people of Gomorrah:
11 "To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?"
Says the LORD.
"I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
And the fat of fed cattle.
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
Or of lambs or goats.

12 "When you come to appear before Me,
Who has required this from your hand,
To trample My courts?
13 Bring no more futile sacrifices;
Incense is an abomination to Me.
The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.
14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts
My soul hates;
They are a trouble to Me,
I am weary of bearing *them*.
15 When you spread out your hands,
I will hide My eyes from you;
Even though you make many prayers,
I will not hear.
Your hands are full of blood.

16 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;

Put away the evil of your doings from
before My eyes.
Cease to do evil,
17 Learn to do good;
Seek justice,
Rebuke the oppressor;[a]
Defend the fatherless,
Plead for the widow.

18 "Come now, and let us reason together,"
Says the LORD,
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient,
You shall eat the good of the land;
20 But if you refuse and rebel,
You shall be devoured by the sword";
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

The Degenerate City

21 How the faithful city has become
a harlot!
It was full of justice;
Righteousness lodged in it,
But now murderers.
22 Your silver has become dross,
Your wine mixed with water.
23 Your princes *are* rebellious,
And companions of thieves;
Everyone loves bribes,
And follows after rewards.
They do not defend the fatherless,
Nor does the cause of the widow
come before them.

24 Therefore the Lord says,
The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One
of Israel,
"Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries,
And take vengeance on My enemies.
25 I will turn My hand against you,
And thoroughly purge away your dross,
And take away all your alloy.
26 I will restore your judges as at the first,
And your counselors as at the
beginning.
Afterward you shall be called the city
of righteousness, the faithful city."

27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice,
And her penitents with righteousness.
28 The destruction of transgressors and
of sinners *shall be* together,
And those who forsake the LORD shall
be consumed.
29 For they[a] shall be ashamed of the
terebinth trees
Which you have desired;
And you shall be embarrassed because
of the gardens
Which you have chosen.
30 For you shall be as a terebinth whose
leaf fades,
And as a garden that has no water.
31 The strong shall be as tinder,
And the work of it as a spark;
Both will burn together,
And no one shall quench *them*.

The Future House of God

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz
saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter
days
That the mountain of the LORD's house
Shall be established on the top of the
mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.
3 Many people shall come and say,
"Come, and let us go up to the
mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the LORD from
Jerusalem.
4 He shall judge between the nations,
And rebuke many people;
They shall beat their swords into
plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against
nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.

The Day of the LORD

5 O house of Jacob, come and let us walk
In the light of the LORD.

1:17 [a]Some ancient versions read *the oppressed*. **1:29** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Targum read *you*.

6 For You have forsaken Your people, the
house of Jacob,
Because they are filled with eastern ways;
They *are* soothsayers like the
Philistines,
And they are pleased with the children
of foreigners.
7 Their land is also full of silver and gold,
And there is no end to their treasures;
Their land is also full of horses,
And there is no end to their chariots.
8 Their land is also full of idols;
They worship the work of their own
hands,
That which their own fingers have made.
9 People bow down,
And each man humbles himself;
Therefore do not forgive them.

10 Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty.
11 The lofty looks of man shall be
humbled,
The haughtiness of men shall be
bowed down,
And the LORD alone shall be exalted
in that day.

12 For the day of the LORD of hosts
Shall come upon everything proud
and lofty,
Upon everything lifted up—
And it shall be brought low—
13 Upon all the cedars of Lebanon *that*
are high and lifted up,
And upon all the oaks of Bashan;
14 Upon all the high mountains,
And upon all the hills *that are* lifted up;
15 Upon every high tower,
And upon every fortified wall;
16 Upon all the ships of Tarshish,
And upon all the beautiful sloops.
17 The loftiness of man shall be bowed
down,
And the haughtiness of men shall be
brought low;
The LORD alone will be exalted in
that day,
18 But the idols He shall utterly abolish.

19 They shall go into the holes of the rocks,
And into the caves of the earth,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises to shake the earth
mightily.

20 In that day a man will cast away his
idols of silver
And his idols of gold,
Which they made, *each* for himself
to worship,
To the moles and bats,
21 To go into the clefts of the rocks,
And into the crags of the rugged rocks,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises to shake the earth
mightily.

22 Sever yourselves from such a man,
Whose breath *is* in his nostrils;
For of what account is he?

Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem

3 For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
Takes away from Jerusalem and from
Judah
The stock and the store,
The whole supply of bread and the
whole supply of water;
2 The mighty man and the man of war,
The judge and the prophet,
And the diviner and the elder;
3 The captain of fifty and the honorable
man,
The counselor and the skillful artisan,
And the expert enchanter.

4 "I will give children *to be* their princes,
And babes shall rule over them.
5 The people will be oppressed,
Every one by another and every one
by his neighbor;
The child will be insolent toward the
elder,
And the base toward the honorable."

6 When a man takes hold of his brother
In the house of his father, *saying,*
"You have clothing;
You be our ruler,
And *let* these ruins *be* under your
power,"[a]

3:6 [a]Literally *hand*

7 In that day he will protest, saying,
"I cannot cure *your* ills,
For in my house *is* neither food nor clothing;
Do not make me a ruler of the people."

8 For Jerusalem stumbled,
And Judah is fallen,
Because their tongue and their doings
Are against the LORD,
To provoke the eyes of His glory.
9 The look on their countenance witnesses against them,
And they declare their sin as Sodom;
They do not hide *it.*
Woe to their soul!
For they have brought evil upon themselves.

10 "Say to the righteous that *it shall be* well *with them,*
For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
11 Woe to the wicked! *It shall be* ill *with him,*
For the reward of his hands shall be given him.
12 *As for* My people, children *are* their oppressors,
And women rule over them.
O My people! Those who lead you cause *you* to err,
And destroy the way of your paths."

Oppression and Luxury Condemned

13 The LORD stands up to plead,
And stands to judge the people.
14 The LORD will enter into judgment
With the elders of His people
And His princes:
"For you have eaten up the vineyard;
The plunder of the poor *is* in your houses.
15 What do you mean by crushing My people
And grinding the faces of the poor?"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts.

16 Moreover the LORD says:

"Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
And walk with outstretched necks
And wanton eyes,
Walking and mincing *as* they go,
Making a jingling with their feet,
17 Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab
The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion,
And the LORD will uncover their secret parts."

18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery:
The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents;
19 The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils;
20 The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands;
The perfume boxes, the charms,
21 and the rings;
The nose jewels,
22 the festal apparel, and the mantles;
The outer garments, the purses,
23 and the mirrors;
The fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

24 And so it shall be:

Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench;
Instead of a sash, a rope;
Instead of well-set hair, baldness;
Instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth;
And branding instead of beauty.
25 Your men shall fall by the sword,
And your mighty in the war.

26 Her gates shall lament and mourn,
And she *being* desolate shall sit on the ground.

4 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying,
"We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel;
Only let us be called by your name,
To take away our reproach."

The Renewal of Zion

2 In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious;
And the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and appealing
For those of Israel who have escaped.

3 And it shall come to pass that *he who is*
left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will
be called holy—everyone who is recorded
among the living in Jerusalem. 4 When
the Lord has washed away the filth of the
daughters of Zion, and purged the blood
of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit
of judgment and by the spirit of burn-
ing, 5 then the LORD will create above every
dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above
her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day
and the shining of a flaming fire by night.
For over all the glory there *will be* a cov-
ering. 6 And there will be a tabernacle for
shade in the daytime from the heat, for
a place of refuge, and for a shelter from
storm and rain.

Now let me sing to my Well-beloved
a song of my Beloved regarding His
vineyard: My Well-beloved has a
vineyard on a very fruitful hill.
ISAIAH 5:1

God's Disappointing Vineyard

5 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved
A song of my Beloved regarding His
vineyard:

My Well-beloved has a vineyard
On a very fruitful hill.
2 He dug it up and cleared out its
stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
He built a tower in its midst,
And also made a winepress in it;
So He expected *it* to bring forth *good*
grapes,
But it brought forth wild grapes.

3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
Judge, please, between Me and My
vineyard.
4 What more could have been done to
My vineyard
That I have not done in it?
Why then, when I expected *it* to bring
forth *good* grapes,
Did it bring forth wild grapes?
5 And now, please let Me tell you what I
will do to My vineyard:
I will take away its hedge, and it shall
be burned;
And break down its wall, and it shall be
trampled down.
6 I will lay it waste;
It shall not be pruned or dug,
But there shall come up briers and
thorns.
I will also command the clouds
That they rain no rain on it."

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is*
the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah are His pleasant
plant.
He looked for justice, but behold,
oppression;
For righteousness, but behold, a cry
for help.

Impending Judgment on Excesses

8 Woe to those who join house to house;
They add field to field,
Till *there is* no place
Where they may dwell alone in the
midst of the land!
9 In my hearing the LORD of hosts *said,*
"Truly, many houses shall be desolate,
Great and beautiful ones, without
inhabitant.
10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield
one bath,
And a homer of seed shall yield one
ephah."

11 Woe to those who rise early in the
morning,
That they may follow intoxicating drink;
Who continue until night, *till* wine
inflames them!
12 The harp and the strings,
The tambourine and flute,
And wine are in their feasts;
But they do not regard the work of
the LORD,
Nor consider the operation of His hands.

13 Therefore my people have gone into
captivity,
Because *they have* no knowledge;
Their honorable men *are* famished,

And their multitude dried up with
thirst.
14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself
And opened its mouth beyond
measure;
Their glory and their multitude and
their pomp,
And he who is jubilant, shall descend
into it.
15 People shall be brought down,
Each man shall be humbled,
And the eyes of the lofty shall be
humbled.
16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted
in judgment,
And God who is holy shall be hallowed
in righteousness.
17 Then the lambs shall feed in their
pasture,
And in the waste places of the fat ones
strangers shall eat.

18 Woe to those who draw iniquity with
cords of vanity,
And sin as if with a cart rope;
19 That say, "Let Him make speed *and*
hasten His work,
That we may see *it;*
And let the counsel of the Holy One of
Israel draw near and come,
That we may know *it*."

20 Woe to those who call evil good, and
good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light
for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet
for bitter!

21 Woe to *those who are* wise in their
own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

22 Woe to men mighty at drinking wine,
Woe to men valiant for mixing
intoxicating drink,
23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe,
And take away justice from the
righteous man!

24 Therefore, as the fire devours the
stubble,
And the flame consumes the chaff,
So their root will be as rottenness,
And their blossom will ascend like dust;
Because they have rejected the law of
the LORD of hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy
One of Israel.
25 Therefore the anger of the LORD is
aroused against His people;
He has stretched out His hand against
them
And stricken them,
And the hills trembled.
Their carcasses *were* as refuse in the
midst of the streets.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

26 He will lift up a banner to the nations
from afar,
And will whistle to them from the end
of the earth;
Surely they shall come with speed,
swiftly.
27 No one will be weary or stumble
among them,
No one will slumber or sleep;
Nor will the belt on their loins be
loosed,
Nor the strap of their sandals be broken;
28 Whose arrows *are* sharp,
And all their bows bent;
Their horses' hooves will seem like flint,
And their wheels like a whirlwind.
29 Their roaring *will be* like a lion,
They will roar like young lions;
Yes, they will roar
And lay hold of the prey;
They will carry *it* away safely,
And no one will deliver.
30 In that day they will roar against them
Like the roaring of the sea.
And if *one* looks to the land,
Behold, darkness *and* sorrow;
And the light is darkened by the clouds.

Isaiah Called to Be a Prophet

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw
the Lord sitting on a throne, high and
lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the
temple. 2Above it stood seraphim; each one
had six wings: with two he covered his face,
with two he covered his feet, and with two
he flew. 3And one cried to another and said:

HYMNS

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"

ISAIAH 6:1–3

"Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (v. 5). How could Isaiah respond any differently? He was witnessing the Lord Most High, who is so great, just His robe filled the entire temple. The covenant God of Israel, surrounded by angels who had to cover their own faces with their wings in the presence of His glory. Isaiah was no dummy. He knew the Scriptures: "For no man shall see Me, and live" (Ex. 33:20). All at once, he was in awe, he was humbled, and he was terrified. But God didn't just appear to Isaiah for the fun of it. He had a divine purpose, and in His infinite mercy, He sent sent one of His angels flying towards Isaiah, taking a burning coal from the altar to touch his lips and take away his sin. With his sin wiped away and his lips purified, Isaiah was ready to answer God's challenge: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" to which Isaiah immediately responded, "Here am I! Send me" (v. 8).

"Here am I! Send me" has been the chorus of missionaries throughout history, heeding God's call to give His message of hope and redemption to people all over the world. It was the cry of Reginald Heber, an Anglican clergyman in Shropshire, England, who so desperately wanted to fight in the front lines of the mission field in India. But it would be several years before that dream came to fruition. In the meantime, Heber served his church in earnest, writing several hymns and even aspiring to create a hymnal that corresponded with the church calendar. When preparing the service for Trinity Sunday, he wrote the now famous hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy."

The Lord did eventually send Heber to India, where he was named the Bishop of Calcutta. With this commission, he was able to share the love of Christ throughout India as he toured the country, visiting mission stations, founding schools, and starting new churches. His time there, however, was short. During a visit to Trichinopoly, he drowned when he had a stroke while taking a bath. Although he was just forty-three when he died, Heber left behind a rich legacy of schools, churches, and hymns, the most famous of which captures so beautifully Isaiah's vision.

Holy, Holy, Holy

Reginald Heber | 1826

1. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessèd Trinity!

2. Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.

3. Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name,
in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessèd Trinity!

"Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth *is* full of His glory!"

4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 So I said:

"Woe *is* me, for I am undone!
Because I *am* a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King,
The LORD of hosts."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth *with it,* and said:

"Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin purged."

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

"Whom shall I send,
And who will go for Us?"

Then I said, "Here *am* I! Send me."

9 And He said, "Go, and tell this people:

'Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'

10 "Make the heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed."

11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?"
And He answered:

"Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant,
The houses are without a man,
The land is utterly desolate,
12 The LORD has removed men far away,
And the forsaken places *are* many in the midst of the land.
13 But yet a tenth *will be* in it,
And will return and be for consuming,
As a terebinth tree or as an oak,
Whose stump *remains* when it is cut down.
So the holy seed *shall be* its stump."

Isaiah Sent to King Ahaz

7 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to *make* war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2 And it was told to the house of David, saying, "Syria's forces are deployed in Ephraim." So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

3 Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub[a] your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field, 4 and say to him: 'Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, 6 "Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabel"—7 thus says the Lord GOD:

"It shall not stand,
Nor shall it come to pass.
8 For the head of Syria *is* Damascus,
And the head of Damascus *is* Rezin.
Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken,
So that it will not *be* a people.
9 The head of Ephraim *is* Samaria,
And the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son.
If you will not believe,
Surely you shall not be established." '"

The Immanuel Prophecy

10 Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11 "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above."

12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!"

7:3 [a]Literally *A Remnant Shall Return*

13 Then he said, "Hear now, O house of
David! *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men,
but will you weary my God also? 14 Therefore
the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold,
the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son,
and shall call His name Immanuel.[a] 15 Curds
and honey He shall eat, that He may know
to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 For
before the Child shall know to refuse the
evil and choose the good, the land that you
dread will be forsaken by both her kings.
17 The LORD will bring the king of Assyria
upon you and your people and your father's
house—days that have not come since the
day that Ephraim departed from Judah."

18 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will whistle for the fly
That *is* in the farthest part of the rivers
of Egypt,
And for the bee that *is* in the land of
Assyria.
19 They will come, and all of them will
rest
In the desolate valleys and in the clefts
of the rocks,
And on all thorns and in all pastures.

20 In the same day the Lord will shave
with a hired razor,
With those from beyond the River,[a]
with the king of Assyria,
The head and the hair of the legs,
And will also remove the beard.

21 It shall be in that day
That a man will keep alive a young cow
and two sheep;
22 So it shall be, from the abundance of
milk they give,
That he will eat curds;
For curds and honey everyone will eat
who is left in the land.

23 It shall happen in that day,
That wherever there could be a
thousand vines
Worth a thousand *shekels* of silver,
It will be for briers and thorns.
24 With arrows and bows *men* will come
there,
Because all the land will become briers
and thorns.
25 And to any hill which could be dug
with the hoe,
You will not go there for fear of briers
and thorns;
But it will become a range for oxen
And a place for sheep to roam.

Assyria Will Invade the Land

8 Moreover the LORD said to me, "Take
a large scroll, and write on it with a
man's pen concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-
Baz.[a] 2 And I will take for Myself faithful
witnesses to record, Uriah the priest and
Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah."

3 Then I went to the prophetess, and she
conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD
said to me, "Call his name Maher-Shalal-
Hash-Baz; 4 for before the child shall have
knowledge to cry 'My father' and 'My
mother,' the riches of Damascus and the
spoil of Samaria will be taken away before
the king of Assyria."

5 The LORD also spoke to me again,
saying:

6 "Inasmuch as these people refused
The waters of Shiloah that flow softly,
And rejoice in Rezin and in Remaliah's
son;
7 Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings
up over them
The waters of the River,[a] strong and
mighty—
The king of Assyria and all his glory;
He will go up over all his channels
And go over all his banks.
8 He will pass through Judah,
He will overflow and pass over,
He will reach up to the neck;
And the stretching out of his wings
Will fill the breadth of Your land, O
Immanuel.[a]

9 "Be shattered, O you peoples, and be
broken in pieces!
Give ear, all you from far countries.
Gird yourselves, but be broken in
pieces;
Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces.
10 Take counsel together, but it will come
to nothing;

7:14 [a]Literally *God-With-Us* **7:20** [a]That is, the Euphrates
8:1 [a]Literally *Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty* **8:7** [a]That is, the Euphrates
8:8 [a]Literally *God-With-Us*

His name will be called Wonderful.
ISAIAH 9:6

The names given to Jesus by the prophets (what He would be) and by His followers (what He is) are an amazing revelation of the dependable qualities of our Lord to meet our every need. But names and attributes are but portions and symbols of the true God. These are feeble efforts at describing something so big and grand, so all-sufficient and immense that language fails us. The Word was never supposed to be limited to the words that describe it or a single experience of its demonstration in our lives. The God we manage in word only hints at the God in truth—and such a Truth! The pure Truth is an awesome thing, capable of dividing the soul and spirit, more accurate than a laser (Heb. 4:12). It *is* light in its not-yet-discovered essence. It is Truth with no shading. It is life with no decaying.



Speak the word, but it will not stand,
For God *is* with us."[a]

Fear God, Heed His Word

[11]For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying:

[12] "Do not say, 'A conspiracy,'
Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy,
Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.
[13] The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow;
Let Him *be* your fear,
And *let* Him *be* your dread.
[14] He will be as a sanctuary,
But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense
To both the houses of Israel,
As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
[15] And many among them shall stumble;
They shall fall and be broken,
Be snared and taken."

[16] Bind up the testimony,
Seal the law among my disciples.
[17] And I will wait on the LORD,
Who hides His face from the house of Jacob;
And I will hope in Him.
[18] Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me!
We are for signs and wonders in Israel
From the LORD of hosts,
Who dwells in Mount Zion.

[19]And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? *Should they seek* the dead on behalf of the living? [20]To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.

[21]They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. [22]Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and *they will be* driven into darkness.

8:10 [a]Hebrew *Immanuel*

The Government of the Promised Son

9 Nevertheless the gloom *will* not *be*
upon her who *is* distressed,
As when at first He lightly esteemed
The land of Zebulun and the land of
Naphtali,
And afterward more heavily
oppressed *her,*
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.
2 The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the
shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.

3 You have multiplied the nation
And increased its joy;[a]
They rejoice before You
According to the joy of harvest,
As *men* rejoice when they divide
the spoil.
4 For You have broken the yoke of his
burden
And the staff of his shoulder,
The rod of his oppressor,
As in the day of Midian.
5 For every warrior's sandal from the
noisy battle,
And garments rolled in blood,
Will be used for burning *and* fuel of fire.

6 For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His
shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the increase of *His* government
and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over
His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with
judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will
perform this.

The Punishment of Samaria

8 The Lord sent a word against Jacob,
And it has fallen on Israel.
9 All the people will know—
Ephraim and the inhabitant of
Samaria—
Who say in pride and arrogance of
heart:
10 "The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with hewn stones;
The sycamores are cut down,
But we will replace *them* with cedars."
11 Therefore the LORD shall set up
The adversaries of Rezin against him,
And spur his enemies on,
12 The Syrians before and the Philistines
behind;
And they shall devour Israel with an
open mouth.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

13 For the people do not turn to Him
who strikes them,
Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts.
14 Therefore the LORD will cut off head
and tail from Israel,
Palm branch and bulrush in one day.
15 The elder and honorable, he *is* the head;
The prophet who teaches lies, he *is*
the tail.
16 For the leaders of this people cause
them to err,
And *those who are* led by them are
destroyed.
17 Therefore the Lord will have no joy
in their young men,
Nor have mercy on their fatherless
and widows;
For everyone *is* a hypocrite and an
evildoer,
And every mouth speaks folly.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

18 For wickedness burns as the fire;
It shall devour the briers and thorns,
And kindle in the thickets of the forest;
They shall mount up *like* rising smoke.
19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts
The land is burned up,
And the people shall be as fuel for
the fire;

9:3 [a]Following Qere and Targum; Kethib and Vulgate read *not increased joy;* Septuagint reads *Most of the people You brought down in Your joy.*

No man shall spare his brother.
20 And he shall snatch on the right hand
And be hungry;
He shall devour on the left hand
And not be satisfied;
Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm.
21 Manasseh *shall devour* Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh;
Together they *shall be* against Judah.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

10 "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees,
Who write misfortune,
Which they have prescribed
2 To rob the needy of justice,
And to take what is right from the poor of My people,
That widows may be their prey,
And *that* they may rob the fatherless.
3 What will you do in the day of punishment,
And in the desolation *which* will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your glory?
4 Without Me they shall bow down among the prisoners,
And they shall fall among the slain."

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

Arrogant Assyria Also Judged

5 "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger
And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.
6 I will send him against an ungodly nation,
And against the people of My wrath
I will give him charge,
To seize the spoil, to take the prey,
And to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
7 Yet he does not mean so,
Nor does his heart think so;
But *it is* in his heart to destroy,
And cut off not a few nations.
8 For he says,
'*Are* not my princes altogether kings?
9 *Is* not Calno like Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad?
Is not Samaria like Damascus?
10 As my hand has found the kingdoms of the idols,
Whose carved images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria,
11 As I have done to Samaria and her idols,
Shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols?'"

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, *that He will say,* "I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks."
13 For he says:

"By the strength of my hand I have done *it,*
And by my wisdom, for I am prudent;
Also I have removed the boundaries of the people,
And have robbed their treasuries;
So I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant *man.*
14 My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people,
And as one gathers eggs *that are* left,
I have gathered all the earth;
And there was no one who moved *his* wing,
Nor opened *his* mouth with even a peep."

15 Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it?
Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it?
As if a rod could wield *itself* against those who lift it up,
Or as if a staff could lift up, *as if it were* not wood!
16 Therefore the Lord, the Lord[a] of hosts,
Will send leanness among his fat ones;
And under his glory
He will kindle a burning
Like the burning of a fire.
17 So the Light of Israel will be for a fire,
And his Holy One for a flame;

10:16 [a]Following Bomberg; Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls read *YHWH* (*the* LORD).

It will burn and devour
His thorns and his briers in one day.
18 And it will consume the glory of his
forest and of his fruitful field,
Both soul and body;
And they will be as when a sick man
wastes away.
19 Then the rest of the trees of his forest
Will be so few in number
That a child may write them.

The Returning Remnant of Israel

20 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the remnant of Israel,
And such as have escaped of the house
of Jacob,
Will never again depend on him who
defeated them,
But will depend on the LORD, the Holy
One of Israel, in truth.
21 The remnant will return, the remnant
of Jacob,
To the Mighty God.
22 For though your people, O Israel, be as
the sand of the sea,
A remnant of them will return;
The destruction decreed shall overflow
with righteousness.
23 For the Lord GOD of hosts
Will make a determined end
In the midst of all the land.

24Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: "O My people, who dwell in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of Egypt. 25For yet a very little while and the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction." 26And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; *as* His rod was on the sea, so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.

27 It shall come to pass in that day
That his burden will be taken away
from your shoulder,
And his yoke from your neck,
And the yoke will be destroyed
because of the anointing oil.

28 He has come to Aiath,
He has passed Migron;
At Michmash he has attended to his
equipment.
29 They have gone along the ridge,
They have taken up lodging at Geba.
Ramah is afraid,
Gibeah of Saul has fled.
30 Lift up your voice,
O daughter of Gallim!
Cause it to be heard as far as Laish—
O poor Anathoth![a]
31 Madmenah has fled,
The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge.
32 As yet he will remain at Nob that day;
He will shake his fist at the mount of
the daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem.

33 Behold, the Lord,
The LORD of hosts,
Will lop off the bough with terror;
Those of high stature *will be* hewn down,
And the haughty will be humbled.
34 He will cut down the thickets of the
forest with iron,
And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty
One.

The Reign of Jesse's Offspring

11 There shall come forth a Rod from
the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest
upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and
understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the
fear of the LORD.

3 His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD,
And He shall not judge by the sight
of His eyes,
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
4 But with righteousness He shall judge
the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek
of the earth;
He shall strike the earth with the rod
of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He
shall slay the wicked.

10:30 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *Listen to her, O Anathoth.*

I will trust and not be afraid; for YAH, the LORD, is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation.
ISAIAH 12:2

It is impossible to really function in life weak and songless. No wonder so many insurmountable situations have been faced with a song. When we visited the Roman Coliseum, we were told that when the early Christians were facing the lions waiting to be devoured, they sang. Paul and Silas sang in prison. The American civil rights movement sang its way to every breakthrough.

When we choose to live right, we are invited—maybe mandated—to unload the weight of whatever we face on the Lord. The result? He will sustain and hold us on target. And best of all, in our total loss of strength we will find a new strength—the strength of YAH—that will save us with *joy*. A song will always be the surprising result!



5 Righteousness shall be the belt of
His loins,
And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the
young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the
fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play by the
cobra's hole,
And the weaned child shall put his
hand in the viper's den.
9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all
My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the
knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.

10 "And in that day there shall be a Root
of Jesse,
Who shall stand as a banner to the
people;
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be glorious."

11 It shall come to pass in that day
That the Lord shall set His hand again
the second time
To recover the remnant of His people
who are left,
From Assyria and Egypt,
From Pathros and Cush,
From Elam and Shinar,
From Hamath and the islands of the sea.

12 He will set up a banner for the nations,
And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
And gather together the dispersed
of Judah
From the four corners of the earth.
13 Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart,
And the adversaries of Judah shall
be cut off;
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.
14 But they shall fly down upon the
shoulder of the Philistines toward
the west;

Together they shall plunder the
people of the East;
They shall lay their hand on Edom
and Moab;
And the people of Ammon shall obey
them.
15 The LORD will utterly destroy[a] the
tongue of the Sea of Egypt;
With His mighty wind He will shake
His fist over the River,[b]
And strike it in the seven streams,
And make *men* cross over dry-shod.
16 There will be a highway for the
remnant of His people
Who will be left from Assyria,
As it was for Israel
In the day that he came up from the
land of Egypt.

Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; "For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation."
ISAIAH 12:2

A Hymn of Praise

12 And in that day you will say:
"O LORD, I will praise You;
Though You were angry with me,
Your anger is turned away, and You
comfort me.
2 Behold, God *is* my salvation,
I will trust and not be afraid;
'For YAH, the LORD, *is* my strength
and song;
He also has become my salvation.'"[a]

3 Therefore with joy you will draw water
From the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day you will say:

"Praise the LORD, call upon His name;
Declare His deeds among the peoples,
Make mention that His name is
exalted.
5 Sing to the LORD,
For He has done excellent things;
This *is* known in all the earth.
6 Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion,
For great *is* the Holy One of Israel in
your midst!"

Sing to the LORD, for He has done excellent things; this is known in all the earth.
ISAIAH 12:5

Proclamation Against Babylon

13 The burden against Babylon which
Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

2 "Lift up a banner on the high mountain,
Raise your voice to them;
Wave your hand, that they may enter
the gates of the nobles.
3 I have commanded My sanctified ones;
I have also called My mighty ones for
My anger—
Those who rejoice in My exaltation."

4 The noise of a multitude in the
mountains,
Like that of many people!
A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of
nations gathered together!
The LORD of hosts musters
The army for battle.
5 They come from a far country,
From the end of heaven—
The LORD and His weapons of
indignation,
To destroy the whole land.

6 Wail, for the day of the LORD *is* at hand!
It will come as destruction from the
Almighty.
7 Therefore all hands will be limp,
Every man's heart will melt,
8 And they will be afraid.
Pangs and sorrows will take hold of *them;*
They will be in pain as a woman in
childbirth;
They will be amazed at one another;
Their faces *will be like* flames.

9 Behold, the day of the LORD comes,
Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,

11:15 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *dry up*. [b]That is, the Euphrates **12:2** [a]Exodus 15:2

To lay the land desolate;
And He will destroy its sinners from it.
10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations
Will not give their light;
The sun will be darkened in its going forth,
And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

11 "I will punish the world for *its* evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
I will halt the arrogance of the proud,
And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold,
A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.
13 Therefore I will shake the heavens,
And the earth will move out of her place,
In the wrath of the LORD of hosts
And in the day of His fierce anger.
14 It shall be as the hunted gazelle,
And as a sheep that no man takes up;
Every man will turn to his own people,
And everyone will flee to his own land.
15 Everyone who is found will be thrust through,
And everyone who is captured will fall by the sword.
16 Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes;
Their houses will be plundered
And their wives ravished.

17 "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them,
Who will not regard silver;
And *as for* gold, they will not delight in it.
18 Also *their* bows will dash the young men to pieces,
And they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb;
Their eye will not spare children.
19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride,
Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
20 It will never be inhabited,
Nor will it be settled from generation to generation;
Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there,
Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.
21 But wild beasts of the desert will lie there,
And their houses will be full of owls;
Ostriches will dwell there,
And wild goats will caper there.
22 The hyenas will howl in their citadels,
And jackals in their pleasant palaces.
Her time *is* near to come,
And her days will not be prolonged."

Mercy on Jacob

14 For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. 2Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors.

The whole earth is at rest and quiet;
they break forth into singing.
ISAIAH 14:7

Fall of the King of Babylon

3It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, 4that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say:

"How the oppressor has ceased,
The golden[a] city ceased!
5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked,
The scepter of the rulers;
6 He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke,
He who ruled the nations in anger,
Is persecuted *and* no one hinders.
7 The whole earth is at rest *and* quiet;
They break forth into singing.
8 Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you,
And the cedars of Lebanon,

14:4 [a]Or *insolent*

Saying, 'Since you were cut down,
No woodsman has come up against us.'

9 "Hell from beneath is excited about you,
To meet *you* at your coming;
It stirs up the dead for you,
All the chief ones of the earth;
It has raised up from their thrones
All the kings of the nations.
10 They all shall speak and say to you:
'Have you also become as weak as we?
Have you become like us?
11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol,
And the sound of your stringed instruments;
The maggot is spread under you,
And worms cover you.'

The Fall of Lucifer

12 "How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer,[a] son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
13 For you have said in your heart:
'I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.'
15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,
To the lowest depths of the Pit.

16 "Those who see you will gaze at you,
And consider you, *saying:*
'*Is* this the man who made the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,
17 Who made the world as a wilderness
And destroyed its cities,
Who did not open the house of his prisoners?'

18 "All the kings of the nations,
All of them, sleep in glory,
Everyone in his own house;
19 But you are cast out of your grave
Like an abominable branch,
Like the garment of those who are slain,
Thrust through with a sword,
Who go down to the stones of the pit,
Like a corpse trodden underfoot.
20 You will not be joined with them in burial,
Because you have destroyed your land
And slain your people.
The brood of evildoers shall never be named.
21 Prepare slaughter for his children
Because of the iniquity of their fathers,
Lest they rise up and possess the land,
And fill the face of the world with cities."

Babylon Destroyed

22 "For I will rise up against them," says the LORD of hosts,
"And cut off from Babylon the name and remnant,
And offspring and posterity," says the LORD.
23 "I will also make it a possession for the porcupine,
And marshes of muddy water;
I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," says the LORD of hosts.

Assyria Destroyed

24 The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying,
"Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass,
And as I have purposed, *so* it shall stand:
25 That I will break the Assyrian in My land,
And on My mountains tread him underfoot.
Then his yoke shall be removed from them,
And his burden removed from their shoulders.
26 This *is* the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth,
And this *is* the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.
27 For the LORD of hosts has purposed,
And who will annul *it?*
His hand *is* stretched out,
And who will turn it back?"

Philistia Destroyed

28 This is the burden which came in the year that King Ahaz died.

29 "Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia,

14:12 [a]Literally *Day Star*

Because the rod that struck you is
broken;
For out of the serpent's roots will come
forth a viper,
And its offspring *will be* a fiery flying
serpent.
30 The firstborn of the poor will feed,
And the needy will lie down in safety;
I will kill your roots with famine,
And it will slay your remnant.
31 Wail, O gate! Cry, O city!
All you of Philistia *are* dissolved;
For smoke will come from the north,
And no one *will be* alone in his
appointed times."

32 What will they answer the messengers
of the nation?
That the LORD has founded Zion,
And the poor of His people shall take
refuge in it.

Proclamation Against Moab

15 The burden against Moab.

Because in the night Ar of Moab is
laid waste
And destroyed,
Because in the night Kir of Moab is
laid waste
And destroyed,
2 He has gone up to the temple[a] and
Dibon,
To the high places to weep.
Moab will wail over Nebo and over
Medeba;
On all their heads *will be* baldness,
And every beard cut off.
3 In their streets they will clothe
themselves with sackcloth;
On the tops of their houses
And in their streets
Everyone will wail, weeping bitterly.
4 Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out,
Their voice shall be heard as far as
Jahaz;
Therefore the armed soldiers[a] of Moab
will cry out;
His life will be burdensome to him.

5 "My heart will cry out for Moab;
His fugitives *shall flee* to Zoar,
Like a three-year-old heifer.[a]
For by the Ascent of Luhith
They will go up with weeping;
For in the way of Horonaim
They will raise up a cry of destruction,
6 For the waters of Nimrim will be
desolate,
For the green grass has withered away;
The grass fails, there is nothing green.
7 Therefore the abundance they have
gained,
And what they have laid up,
They will carry away to the Brook of
the Willows.
8 For the cry has gone all around the
borders of Moab,
Its wailing to Eglaim
And its wailing to Beer Elim.
9 For the waters of Dimon[a] will be full
of blood;
Because I will bring more upon Dimon,[b]
Lions upon him who escapes from Moab,
And on the remnant of the land."

Moab Destroyed

16 Send the lamb to the ruler of
the land,
From Sela to the wilderness,
To the mount of the daughter of Zion.
2 For it shall be as a wandering bird
thrown out of the nest;
So shall be the daughters of Moab at
the fords of the Arnon.

3 "Take counsel, execute judgment;
Make your shadow like the night in the
middle of the day;
Hide the outcasts,
Do not betray him who escapes.
4 Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab;
Be a shelter to them from the face of
the spoiler.
For the extortioner is at an end,
Devastation ceases,
The oppressors are consumed out of
the land.
5 In mercy the throne will be
established;
And One will sit on it in truth, in the
tabernacle of David,

15:2 [a]Hebrew *bayith,* literally *house* **15:4** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *loins.* **15:5** [a]Or *The Third Eglath,* an unknown city (compare Jeremiah 48:34) **15:9** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls and Vulgate read *Dibon;* Septuagint reads *Rimon.* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls and Vulgate read *Dibon;* Septuagint reads *Rimon.*

Gladness is taken away, and joy from the plentiful field; in the vineyards there will be no singing, nor will there be shouting; no treaders will tread out wine in the presses; I have made their shouting cease.
ISAIAH 16:10

Judging and seeking justice and
hastening righteousness."

6 We have heard of the pride of Moab—
He is very proud—
Of his haughtiness and his pride and
his wrath;
But his lies *shall* not *be* so.
7 Therefore Moab shall wail for Moab;
Everyone shall wail.
For the foundations of Kir Hareseth
you shall mourn;
Surely *they are* stricken.

8 For the fields of Heshbon languish,
And the vine of Sibmah;
The lords of the nations have broken
down its choice plants,
Which have reached to Jazer
And wandered through the wilderness.
Her branches are stretched out,
They are gone over the sea.
9 Therefore I will bewail the vine
of Sibmah,
With the weeping of Jazer;
I will drench you with my tears,
O Heshbon and Elealeh;
For battle cries have fallen
Over your summer fruits and your
harvest.

10 Gladness is taken away,
And joy from the plentiful field;
In the vineyards there will be no
singing,
Nor will there be shouting;
No treaders will tread out wine in the
presses;
I have made their shouting cease.
11 Therefore my heart shall resound like a
harp for Moab,
And my inner being for Kir Heres.

12 And it shall come to pass,
When it is seen that Moab is weary
on the high place,
That he will come to his sanctuary
to pray;
But he will not prevail.

13 This *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning Moab since that time.
14 But now the LORD has spoken, saying,
"Within three years, as the years of a hired man, the glory of Moab will be despised with all that great multitude, and the remnant *will be* very small *and* feeble."

Proclamation Against Syria and Israel

17 The burden against Damascus.

"Behold, Damascus will cease from
being a city,
And it will be a ruinous heap.
2 The cities of Aroer *are* forsaken;[a]
They will be for flocks
Which lie down, and no one will make
them afraid.
3 The fortress also will cease from Ephraim,
The kingdom from Damascus,
And the remnant of Syria;
They will be as the glory of the
children of Israel,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

4 "In that day it shall come to pass
That the glory of Jacob will wane,
And the fatness of his flesh grow lean.
5 It shall be as when the harvester
gathers the grain,
And reaps the heads with his arm;
It shall be as he who gathers heads
of grain
In the Valley of Rephaim.
6 Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it,
Like the shaking of an olive tree,
Two *or* three olives at the top of the
uppermost bough,
Four *or* five in its most fruitful branches,"
Says the LORD God of Israel.

7 In that day a man will look to his Maker,
And his eyes will have respect for the
Holy One of Israel.

17:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *It shall be forsaken forever;* Targum reads *Its cities shall be forsaken and desolate.*

8 He will not look to the altars,
The work of his hands;
He will not respect what his fingers
have made,
Nor the wooden images[a] nor the
incense altars.

9 In that day his strong cities will be as a
forsaken bough[a]
And an uppermost branch,[b]
Which they left because of the
children of Israel;
And there will be desolation.

10 Because you have forgotten the God of
your salvation,
And have not been mindful of the
Rock of your stronghold,
Therefore you will plant pleasant plants
And set out foreign seedlings;
11 In the day you will make your plant
to grow,
And in the morning you will make your
seed to flourish;
But the harvest *will be* a heap of ruins
In the day of grief and desperate sorrow.

12 Woe to the multitude of many people
Who make a noise like the roar of
the seas,
And to the rushing of nations
That make a rushing like the rushing of
mighty waters!
13 The nations will rush like the rushing
of many waters;
But *God* will rebuke them and they will
flee far away,
And be chased like the chaff of the
mountains before the wind,
Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.
14 Then behold, at eventide, trouble!
And before the morning, he *is* no more.
This *is* the portion of those who
plunder us,
And the lot of those who rob us.

Proclamation Against Ethiopia

18 Woe to the land shadowed with
buzzing wings,
Which *is* beyond the rivers of
Ethiopia,
2 Which sends ambassadors by sea,
Even in vessels of reed on the waters,
saying,
"Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall
and smooth *of skin,*
To a people terrible from their
beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide."

3 All inhabitants of the world and
dwellers on the earth:
When he lifts up a banner on the
mountains, you see *it;*
And when he blows a trumpet, you
hear *it.*
4 For so the LORD said to me,
"I will take My rest,
And I will look from My dwelling place
Like clear heat in sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the heat of
harvest."
5 For before the harvest, when the bud
is perfect
And the sour grape is ripening in the
flower,
He will both cut off the sprigs with
pruning hooks
And take away *and* cut down the
branches.
6 They will be left together for the
mountain birds of prey
And for the beasts of the earth;
The birds of prey will summer on them,
And all the beasts of the earth will
winter on them.

17:8 [a]Hebrew *Asherim,* Canaanite deities **17:9** [a]Septuagint reads *Hivites;* Targum reads *laid waste;* Vulgate reads *as the plows.* [b]Septuagint reads *Amorites;* Targum reads *in ruins;* Vulgate reads *corn.*

7 In that time a present will be brought
to the LORD of hosts
From[a] a people tall and smooth *of skin,*
And from a people terrible from their
beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide—
To the place of the name of the LORD
of hosts,
To Mount Zion.

Proclamation Against Egypt

19 The burden against Egypt.

Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud,
And will come into Egypt;
The idols of Egypt will totter at His
presence,
And the heart of Egypt will melt in its
midst.

2 "I will set Egyptians against Egyptians;
Everyone will fight against his brother,
And everyone against his neighbor,
City against city, kingdom against
kingdom.
3 The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst;
I will destroy their counsel,
And they will consult the idols and the
charmers,
The mediums and the sorcerers.
4 And the Egyptians I will give
Into the hand of a cruel master,
And a fierce king will rule over them,"
Says the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

5 The waters will fail from the sea,
And the river will be wasted and
dried up.
6 The rivers will turn foul;
The brooks of defense will be emptied
and dried up;
The reeds and rushes will wither.
7 The papyrus reeds by the River,[a] by the
mouth of the River,
And everything sown by the River,
Will wither, be driven away, and be
no more.
8 The fishermen also will mourn;
All those will lament who cast hooks
into the River,
And they will languish who spread nets
on the waters.
9 Moreover those who work in fine flax
And those who weave fine fabric will
be ashamed;
10 And its foundations will be broken.
All who make wages *will be* troubled
of soul.

11 Surely the princes of Zoan *are* fools;
Pharaoh's wise counselors give foolish
counsel.
How do you say to Pharaoh, "I *am* the
son of the wise,
The son of ancient kings?"
12 Where *are* they?
Where are your wise men?
Let them tell you now,
And let them know what the LORD of
hosts has purposed against Egypt.
13 The princes of Zoan have become fools;
The princes of Noph[a] are deceived;
They have also deluded Egypt,
Those who are the mainstay of its tribes.
14 The LORD has mingled a perverse spirit
in her midst;
And they have caused Egypt to err in
all her work,
As a drunken man staggers in his vomit.
15 Neither will there be *any* work for Egypt,
Which the head or tail,
Palm branch or bulrush, may do.[a]

16 In that day Egypt will be like women, and will be afraid and fear because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He waves over it. 17 And the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts which He has determined against it.

Egypt, Assyria, and Israel Blessed

18 In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear by the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction.[a]

19 In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. 20 And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of

19:7 [a]Following Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text omits *From;* Targum reads *To.* **19:7** [a]That is, the Nile **19:13** [a]That is, ancient Memphis **19:15** [a]Compare Isaiah 9:14–16 **19:18** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Arabic, Dead Sea Scrolls, Targum, and Vulgate read *Sun;* Septuagint reads *Asedek* (literally *Righteousness*).

hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. 21Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform *it*. 22And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal *it;* they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

23In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.

24In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, 25whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed *is* Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."

The Sign Against Egypt and Ethiopia

20 In the year that Tartan[a] came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it, 2at the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet." And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

3Then the LORD said, "Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years *for* a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, 4so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. 5Then they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory. 6And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, 'Surely such *is* our expectation, wherever we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?'"

The Fall of Babylon Proclaimed

21 The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea.

As whirlwinds in the South pass through,
So it comes from the desert, from a terrible land.

2 A distressing vision is declared to me;
The treacherous dealer deals treacherously,
And the plunderer plunders.
Go up, O Elam!
Besiege, O Media!
All its sighing I have made to cease.

3 Therefore my loins are filled with pain;
Pangs have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labor.
I was distressed when *I* heard *it;*
I was dismayed when *I* saw *it*.
4 My heart wavered, fearfulness frightened me;
The night for which I longed He turned into fear for me.
5 Prepare the table,
Set a watchman in the tower,
Eat and drink.
Arise, you princes,
Anoint the shield!

6 For thus has the Lord said to me:
"Go, set a watchman,
Let him declare what he sees."
7 And he saw a chariot *with* a pair of horsemen,
A chariot of donkeys, *and* a chariot of camels,
And he listened earnestly with great care.
8 Then he cried, "A lion,[a] my Lord!
I stand continually on the watchtower in the daytime;
I have sat at my post every night.
9 And look, here comes a chariot of men *with* a pair of horsemen!"
Then he answered and said,
"Babylon is fallen, is fallen!
And all the carved images of her gods
He has broken to the ground."

10 Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor!
That which I have heard from the LORD of hosts,
The God of Israel,
I have declared to you.

20:1 [a]Or *the Commander in Chief* **21:8** [a]Dead Sea Scrolls read *Then the observer cried.*

Proclamation Against Edom

11 The burden against Dumah.

He calls to me out of Seir,
"Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?"
12 The watchman said,
"The morning comes, and also the night.
If you will inquire, inquire;
Return! Come back!"

Proclamation Against Arabia

13 The burden against Arabia.

In the forest in Arabia you will lodge,
O you traveling companies of
Dedanites.
14 O inhabitants of the land of Tema,
Bring water to him who is thirsty;
With their bread they met him who
fled.
15 For they fled from the swords, from the
drawn sword,
From the bent bow, and from the
distress of war.

16 For thus the LORD has said to me: "Within a year, according to the year of a hired man, all the glory of Kedar will fail; 17 and the remainder of the number of archers, the mighty men of the people of Kedar, will be diminished; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken *it*."

Proclamation Against Jerusalem

22 The burden against the Valley of Vision.

What ails you now, that you have all
gone up to the housetops,
2 You who are full of noise,
A tumultuous city, a joyous city?
Your slain *men are* not slain with the
sword,
Nor dead in battle.
3 All your rulers have fled together;
They are captured by the archers.
All who are found in you are bound
together;
They have fled from afar.
4 Therefore I said, "Look away from me,
I will weep bitterly;
Do not labor to comfort me
Because of the plundering of the
daughter of my people."

5 For *it is* a day of trouble and treading
down and perplexity
By the Lord GOD of hosts
In the Valley of Vision—
Breaking down the walls
And of crying to the mountain.
6 Elam bore the quiver
With chariots of men *and* horsemen,
And Kir uncovered the shield.
7 It shall come to pass *that* your choicest
valleys
Shall be full of chariots,
And the horsemen shall set themselves
in array at the gate.

8 He removed the protection of Judah.
You looked in that day to the armor
of the House of the Forest;
9 You also saw the damage to the city
of David,
That it was great;
And you gathered together the waters
of the lower pool.
10 You numbered the houses of
Jerusalem,
And the houses you broke down
To fortify the wall.
11 You also made a reservoir between the
two walls
For the water of the old pool.
But you did not look to its Maker,
Nor did you have respect for Him who
fashioned it long ago.

12 And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts
Called for weeping and for mourning,
For baldness and for girding with
sackcloth.
13 But instead, joy and gladness,
Slaying oxen and killing sheep,
Eating meat and drinking wine:
"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow
we die!"

14 Then it was revealed in my hearing by
the LORD of hosts,
"Surely for this iniquity there will be no
atonement for you,
Even to your death," says the Lord GOD
of hosts.

He will swallow up death forever,
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears
from all faces; the rebuke of His people
He will take away from all the earth;
for the LORD has spoken.
ISAIAH 25:8

But has now been revealed by the appearing
of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished
death and brought life and immortality
to light through the gospel.
2 TIMOTHY 1:10

The law had punishments. And the laws were so comprehensive no one could keep them all, so most of the time people lived in fear. But Jesus—oh, Jesus—without breaking or banishing the law, circumvented it, but at the same time satisfied justice by drawing a bigger circle, the circle of a dying love gift, so that all those in the long line of punishment could go free. He cut in line, died, and paid the ultimate price, served the ultimate sentence. Love swallowed vengeance. Love ate the sin and swallowed it *whole*. Just when justice had the whole human race climbing the steps to the guillotine blindfolded, Love offered His perfect head for us all. Now everyone is dancing in the street! Praise music is being played on every instrument imaginable! The old law system has been bought for the express purpose of destroying it so that the joy system could be put in its place. Satan has been made to watch his plan breaking apart—agony for him. But the ultimate agony is that he himself and all his tricks will be burned at the stake. Gone forever!

The Judgment on Shebna

15 Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts:

"Go, proceed to this steward,
To Shebna, who *is* over the house,
and say:
16 'What have you here, and whom have you here,
That you have hewn a sepulcher here,
As he who hews himself a sepulcher on high,
Who carves a tomb for himself in a rock?
17 Indeed, the LORD will throw you away violently,
O mighty man,
And will surely seize you.
18 He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball
Into a large country;
There you shall die, and there your glorious chariots
Shall be the shame of your master's house.
19 So I will drive you out of your office,
And from your position he will pull you down.[a]

20 'Then it shall be in that day,
That I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah;
21 I will clothe him with your robe
And strengthen him with your belt;
I will commit your responsibility into his hand.
He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
And to the house of Judah.
22 The key of the house of David
I will lay on his shoulder;
So he shall open, and no one shall shut;
And he shall shut, and no one shall open.
23 I will fasten him *as* a peg in a secure place,
And he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.

24 "They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers. 25 In that day,' says

22:19 [a]Septuagint omits *he will pull you down;* Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *I will pull you down.*

the LORD of hosts, 'the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that *was* on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken.'"

Proclamation Against Tyre

23 The burden against Tyre.
Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For it is laid waste,
So that there is no house, no harbor;
From the land of Cyprus[a] it is revealed to them.

2 Be still, you inhabitants of the coastland,
You merchants of Sidon,
Whom those who cross the sea have filled.[a]
3 And on great waters the grain of Shihor,
The harvest of the River,[a] *is* her revenue;
And she is a marketplace for the nations.

4 Be ashamed, O Sidon;
For the sea has spoken,
The strength of the sea, saying,
"I do not labor, nor bring forth children;
Neither do I rear young men,
Nor bring up virgins."
5 When the report *reaches* Egypt,
They also will be in agony at the report of Tyre.

6 Cross over to Tarshish;
Wail, you inhabitants of the coastland!
7 *Is* this your joyous *city,*
Whose antiquity *is* from ancient days,
Whose feet carried her far off to dwell?
8 Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning *city,*
Whose merchants *are* princes,
Whose traders *are* the honorable of the earth?
9 The LORD of hosts has purposed it,
To bring to dishonor the pride of all glory,
To bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.

10 Overflow through your land like the River,[a]
O daughter of Tarshish;
There is no more strength.
11 He stretched out His hand over the sea,
He shook the kingdoms;
The LORD has given a commandment against Canaan
To destroy its strongholds.
12 And He said, "You will rejoice no more,
O you oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon.
Arise, cross over to Cyprus;
There also you will have no rest."

13 Behold, the land of the Chaldeans,
This people *which* was not;
Assyria founded it for wild beasts of the desert.
They set up its towers,
They raised up its palaces,
And brought it to ruin.

14 Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For your strength is laid waste.

15 Now it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre will be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king. At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as *in* the song of the harlot:

16 "Take a harp, go about the city,
You forgotten harlot;
Make sweet melody, sing many songs,
That you may be remembered."

17 And it shall be, at the end of seventy years, that the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire, and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. 18 Her gain and her pay will be set apart for the LORD; it will not be treasured nor laid up, for her gain will be for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for fine clothing.

Impending Judgment on the Earth

24 Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste,
Distorts its surface
And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
2 And it shall be:
As with the people, so with the priest;
As with the servant, so with his master;
As with the maid, so with her mistress;

23:1 [a]Hebrew *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus **23:2** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint and Targum read *Passing over the water;* Dead Sea Scrolls read *Your messengers passing over the sea.* **23:3** [a]That is, the Nile **23:10** [a]That is, the Nile

And it will be said in that day:
"Behold, this is our God;
we have waited for Him, and He will save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for Him;
we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."
ISAIAH 25:9

Waiting is the hardest thing of all. Yet it is one of the most important "do-things" we can master. Wait until marriage. Wait on God's timing. Wait for maturity, wisdom, direction. "Wait," Jesus told His disciples, "until you are empowered for what's coming" (see John 14). "Wait," God told Moses, "and see the deliverance of the Lord" (see Ex. 14:13).

In these last days it is easy to become acclimated to the philosophy of the material world, easy to believe that the whole promise of Christ's return is a fairy tale, easy to at least get impatient and "return to our nets" as the disciples did after Christ's death (see John 21). But all of the Revelation of John is threaded with the theme of persistent waiting, perseverance. The prophet Isaiah foresaw the deep satisfaction of those who see the completion of their salvation. "Are we ever glad we waited!" they will sing as they dance in the light of their total liberation!



As with the buyer, so with the seller;
As with the lender, so with the borrower;
As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
3 The land shall be entirely emptied and
utterly plundered,
For the LORD has spoken this word.

4 The earth mourns *and* fades away,
The world languishes *and* fades away;
The haughty people of the earth
languish.
5 The earth is also defiled under its
inhabitants,
Because they have transgressed the laws,
Changed the ordinance,
Broken the everlasting covenant.
6 Therefore the curse has devoured the
earth,
And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth
are burned,
And few men *are* left.

7 The new wine fails, the vine languishes,
All the merry-hearted sigh.
8 The mirth of the tambourine ceases,
The noise of the jubilant ends,
The joy of the harp ceases.
9 They shall not drink wine with a song;
Strong drink is bitter to those who
drink it.
10 The city of confusion is broken down;
Every house is shut up, so that none
may go in.
11 *There is* a cry for wine in the streets,
All joy is darkened,
The mirth of the land is gone.
12 In the city desolation is left,
And the gate is stricken with destruction.
13 When it shall be thus in the midst
of the land among the people,
It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree,
Like the gleaning of grapes when the
vintage is done.

14 They shall lift up their voice, they
shall sing;
For the majesty of the LORD
They shall cry aloud from the sea.
15 Therefore glorify the LORD in the
dawning light,
The name of the LORD God of Israel in
the coastlands of the sea.

16 From the ends of the earth we have
heard songs:
"Glory to the righteous!"
But I said, "I am ruined, ruined!
Woe to me!
The treacherous dealers have dealt
treacherously,
Indeed, the treacherous dealers have
dealt very treacherously."

17 Fear and the pit and the snare
Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.
18 And it shall be
That he who flees from the noise of
the fear
Shall fall into the pit,
And he who comes up from the midst
of the pit
Shall be caught in the snare;
For the windows from on high are open,
And the foundations of the earth are
shaken.

19 The earth is violently broken,
The earth is split open,
The earth is shaken exceedingly.
20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a
drunkard,
And shall totter like a hut;
Its transgression shall be heavy upon it,
And it will fall, and not rise again.

21 It shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will punish on high the
host of exalted ones,
And on the earth the kings of the earth.
22 They will be gathered together,
As prisoners are gathered in the pit,
And will be shut up in the prison;
After many days they will be punished.
23 Then the moon will be disgraced
And the sun ashamed;
For the LORD of hosts will reign
On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
And before His elders, gloriously.

They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the LORD they shall cry aloud from the sea.

ISAIAH 24:14

Praise to God

25 O LORD, You *are* my God.
I will exalt You,
I will praise Your name,
For You have done wonderful *things;*
Your counsels of old *are* faithfulness
and truth.
2 For You have made a city a ruin,
A fortified city a ruin,
A palace of foreigners to be a city no
more;
It will never be rebuilt.
3 Therefore the strong people will
glorify You;
The city of the terrible nations will
fear You.
4 For You have been a strength to the
poor,
A strength to the needy in his distress,
A refuge from the storm,
A shade from the heat;
For the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a
storm *against* the wall.
5 You will reduce the noise of aliens,
As heat in a dry place;
As heat in the shadow of a cloud,
The song of the terrible ones will be
diminished.

6 And in this mountain
The LORD of hosts will make for all
people
A feast of choice pieces,
A feast of wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow,
Of well-refined wines on the lees.
7 And He will destroy on this mountain
The surface of the covering cast over
all people,
And the veil that is spread over all
nations.
8 He will swallow up death forever,
And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears
from all faces;
The rebuke of His people
He will take away from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken.

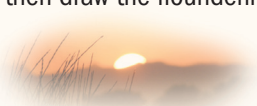
9 And it will be said in that day:
"Behold, this *is* our God;
We have waited for Him, and He will
save us.
This *is* the LORD;

Come, my people, enter your chambers,
and shut your doors behind you;
hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,
until the indignation is past.
ISAIAH 26:20

In the shadow of your wings
I will make my refuge, until these
calamities have passed by.
PSALM 57:1

In general, God wants His children to be in the world as yeast is working in amongst the flour and shortening and the other ingredients. It was not His intention that we should cocoon ourselves away from those who so need to see God's quiet power at work in the day-to-day things.

But when the wicked are raging, when spiritual calamity threatens, God calls us to come home to His heart and rest there. Like going home to the place of security and sanity when we were in college or threatened on the street by bullies, it is sensible and empowering to go home to the heart of God and rest while God does what only God can do to restore justice and stability in a world that is not a friend to grace. Then, He promises, we can carry this stability and peace with us, making us a peace-presence, a stability-restorer in the world's chaos. His peace in us will then draw the floundering to the Master.



We have waited for Him;
We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

10 For on this mountain the hand of the LORD will rest,
And Moab shall be trampled down under Him,
As straw is trampled down for the refuse heap.
11 And He will spread out His hands in their midst
As a swimmer reaches out to swim,
And He will bring down their pride
Together with the trickery of their hands.
12 The fortress of the high fort of your walls
He will bring down, lay low,
And bring to the ground, down to the dust.

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks."
ISAIAH 26:1

A Song of Salvation

26 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

"We have a strong city;
God will appoint salvation *for* walls and bulwarks.
2 Open the gates,
That the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.
3 You will keep *him* in perfect peace,
Whose mind *is* stayed *on You,*
Because he trusts in You.
4 Trust in the LORD forever,
For in YAH, the LORD, *is* everlasting strength.[a]
5 For He brings down those who dwell on high,
The lofty city;
He lays it low,
He lays it low to the ground,
He brings it down to the dust.
6 The foot shall tread it down—

26:4 [a]Or *Rock of Ages*

The feet of the poor
And the steps of the needy."

7 The way of the just *is* uprightness;
O Most Upright,
You weigh the path of the just.
8 Yes, in the way of Your judgments,
O LORD, we have waited for You;
The desire of *our* soul *is* for Your name
And for the remembrance of You.
9 With my soul I have desired You in the night,
Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;
For when Your judgments *are* in the earth,
The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

10 Let grace be shown to the wicked,
Yet he will not learn righteousness;
In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly,
And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.
11 LORD, *when* Your hand is lifted up, they will not see.
But they will see and be ashamed
For *their* envy of people;
Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them.

12 LORD, You will establish peace for us,
For You have also done all our works in us.
13 O LORD our God, masters besides You
Have had dominion over us;
But by You only we make mention of Your name.
14 *They are* dead, they will not live;
They are deceased, they will not rise.
Therefore You have punished and destroyed them,
And made all their memory to perish.
15 You have increased the nation, O LORD,
You have increased the nation;
You are glorified;
You have expanded all the borders of the land.

16 LORD, in trouble they have visited You,
They poured out a prayer *when* Your chastening *was* upon them.

Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.
ISAIAH 26:19

17 As a woman with child
Is in pain and cries out in her pangs,
When she draws near the time of her delivery,
So have we been in Your sight, O LORD.
18 We have been with child, we have been in pain;
We have, as it were, brought forth wind;
We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth,
Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

19 Your dead shall live;
Together with my dead body[a] they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Take Refuge from the Coming Judgment

20 Come, my people, enter your chambers,
And shut your doors behind you;
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,
Until the indignation is past.
21 For behold, the LORD comes out of His place
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her blood,
And will no more cover her slain.

27 In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong,
Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent,
Leviathan that twisted serpent;
And He will slay the reptile that *is* in the sea.

26:19 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *their dead bodies;* Septuagint reads *those in the tombs.*

The Restoration of Israel

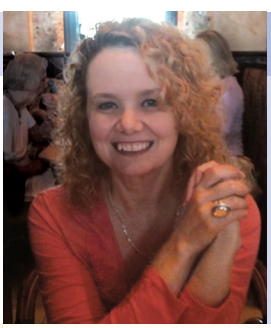
2 In that day sing to her,
"A vineyard of red wine![a]
3 I, the LORD, keep it,
I water it every moment;
Lest any hurt it,
I keep it night and day.
4 Fury *is* not in Me.
Who would set briers *and* thorns
Against Me in battle?
I would go through them,
I would burn them together.
5 Or let him take hold of My strength,
That he may make peace with Me;
And he shall make peace with Me."

6 Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob;
Israel shall blossom and bud,
And fill the face of the world with fruit.

7 Has He struck Israel as He struck those who struck him?
Or has He been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by Him?
8 In measure, by sending it away,
You contended with it.
He removes *it* by His rough wind
In the day of the east wind.
9 Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered;
And this *is* all the fruit of taking away his sin:
When he makes all the stones of the altar
Like chalkstones that are beaten to dust,
Wooden images[a] and incense altars shall not stand.

10 Yet the fortified city *will be* desolate,
The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness;

27:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text (Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*), Bomberg, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*), some Hebrew manuscripts, and Septuagint read *delight;* Targum reads *choice vineyard.*
27:9 [a]Hebrew *Asherim,* Canaanite deities



ROBERTA CROTEAU • Editor of *Homecoming Magazine*, Author

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. | ISAIAH 26:3

P.T. Barnum said there was one born every minute—a sucker, that is. I took the sixty seconds of an early May morning (I think I'm one of only three people in the world) to prove 'em wrong when someone said, "Did you know they forgot to put the word 'gullible' in the dictionary?"

I believed in Santa Claus for eight long years. I knew that if you dug that hole deep enough, you would end up in the middle of China. It wasn't a stretch to think that if you actually made it to the end of the rainbow, there'd be a whole pot of gold for the taking. And a talking cricket was just as good a source as any to prove that when you wish upon a star, your dreams come true.

Doubting Thomas earned his eternal nickname for presumably not being that easy to dupe. He wasn't about to believe the first thing he heard.

There the calf will feed, and there it will lie down
And consume its branches.
11 When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off;
The women come *and* set them on fire.
For it *is* a people of no understanding;
Therefore He who made them will not have mercy on them,
And He who formed them will show them no favor.

12 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will thresh,
From the channel of the River[a] to the Brook of Egypt;
And you will be gathered one by one,
O you children of Israel.

13 So it shall be in that day:
The great trumpet will be blown;
They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria,
And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt,
And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

Woe to Ephraim and Jerusalem

28 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim,
Whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower
Which *is* at the head of the verdant valleys,
To those who are overcome with wine!
2 Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one,
Like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm,
Like a flood of mighty waters overflowing,
Who will bring *them* down to the earth with *His* hand.
3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim,

27:12 [a]That is, the Euphrates

And if what everyone was shouting about was real, he'd believe it just as soon as it stood right in front of him. Sort of the ultimate "yeah, right" that echoes through the ages. Lucky for Thomas, Jesus had a soft spot for those stoic, skeptic souls and let Thomas see and touch to his heart's content.

"Blessed are those who believe without seeing," Jesus said. But somehow you knew it wasn't an indictment of Thomas as much as a marvel that there might be an unfettered circle of believers who'd risk their hearts on everything without tangible proof.

Jesus may have seemed like the circus huckster trying to trick the rabble to enter the tent, but the truth was, He was ready to put on a sideshow of enormous proportions. You could even go so far as to say He ended up putting on the greatest show on earth.

However, there is one thing we can know and trust: the God of wonders never suckers anyone into anything. He came, He saw, and He conquered every heart that was willing to listen to what He had to say. And when He's the one doing the talking, you *know* you can believe it. Because He's never made a promise He couldn't keep.

Will be trampled underfoot;
4 And the glorious beauty is a fading
flower
Which *is* at the head of the verdant
valley,
Like the first fruit before the summer,
Which an observer sees;
He eats it up while it is still in his hand.

5 In that day the LORD of hosts will be
For a crown of glory and a diadem of
beauty
To the remnant of His people,
6 For a spirit of justice to him who sits in
judgment,
And for strength to those who turn
back the battle at the gate.

7 But they also have erred through wine,
And through intoxicating drink are out
of the way;
The priest and the prophet have erred
through intoxicating drink,
They are swallowed up by wine,
They are out of the way through
intoxicating drink;
They err in vision, they stumble *in*
judgment.
8 For all tables are full of vomit *and* filth;
No place *is clean.*

9 "Whom will he teach knowledge?
And whom will he make to understand
the message?
Those *just* weaned from milk?
Those *just* drawn from the breasts?
10 For precept *must be* upon precept,
precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little."

11 For with stammering lips and another
tongue
He will speak to this people,
12 To whom He said, "This *is* the rest
with which
You may cause the weary to rest,"
And, "This *is* the refreshing";
Yet they would not hear.
13 But the word of the LORD was to them,
"Precept upon precept, precept upon
precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little,"
That they might go and fall backward,
and be broken
And snared and caught.

14 Therefore hear the word of the LORD,
you scornful men,
Who rule this people who *are* in
Jerusalem,
15 Because you have said, "We have made
a covenant with death,
And with Sheol we are in agreement.
When the overflowing scourge passes
through,
It will not come to us,
For we have made lies our refuge,
And under falsehood we have hidden
ourselves."

A Cornerstone in Zion

16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a
foundation,
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone,
a sure foundation;
Whoever believes will not act hastily.
17 Also I will make justice the measuring
line,
And righteousness the plummet;
The hail will sweep away the refuge
of lies,
And the waters will overflow the hiding
place.
18 Your covenant with death will be
annulled,
And your agreement with Sheol will
not stand;
When the overflowing scourge passes
through,
Then you will be trampled down by it.
19 As often as it goes out it will take you;
For morning by morning it will
pass over,
And by day and by night;
It will be a terror just to understand
the report."

20 For the bed is too short to stretch
out *on,*
And the covering so narrow that one
cannot wrap himself *in it.*

21 For the LORD will rise up as *at* Mount Perazim,
He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon—
That He may do His work, His awesome work,
And bring to pass His act, His unusual act.
22 Now therefore, do not be mockers,
Lest your bonds be made strong;
For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts,
A destruction determined even upon the whole earth.

Listen to the Teaching of God

23 Give ear and hear my voice,
Listen and hear my speech.
24 Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow?
Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods?
25 When he has leveled its surface,
Does he not sow the black cummin
And scatter the cummin,
Plant the wheat in rows,
The barley in the appointed place,
And the spelt in its place?
26 For He instructs him in right judgment,
His God teaches him.

27 For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge,
Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin;
But the black cummin is beaten out with a stick,
And the cummin with a rod.
28 Bread *flour* must be ground;
Therefore he does not thresh it forever,
Break *it with* his cartwheel,
Or crush it *with* his horsemen.
29 This also comes from the LORD of hosts,
Who is wonderful in counsel *and* excellent in guidance.

Woe to Jerusalem

29 "Woe to Ariel,[a] to Ariel, the city *where* David dwelt!
Add year to year;
Let feasts come around.
2 Yet I will distress Ariel;
There shall be heaviness and sorrow,
And it shall be to Me as Ariel.
3 I will encamp against you all around,
I will lay siege against you with a mound,
And I will raise siegeworks against you.
4 You shall be brought down,
You shall speak out of the ground;
Your speech shall be low, out of the dust;
Your voice shall be like a medium's, out of the ground;
And your speech shall whisper out of the dust.

5 "Moreover the multitude of your foes
Shall be like fine dust,
And the multitude of the terrible ones
Like chaff that passes away;
Yes, it shall be in an instant, suddenly.
6 You will be punished by the LORD of hosts
With thunder and earthquake and great noise,
With storm and tempest
And the flame of devouring fire.
7 The multitude of all the nations who fight against Ariel,
Even all who fight against her and her fortress,
And distress her,
Shall be as a dream of a night vision.
8 It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams,
And look—he eats;
But he awakes, and his soul is still empty;
Or as when a thirsty man dreams,
And look—he drinks;
But he awakes, and indeed *he is* faint,
And his soul still craves:
So the multitude of all the nations shall be,
Who fight against Mount Zion."

The Blindness of Disobedience

9 Pause and wonder!
Blind yourselves and be blind!
They are drunk, but not with wine;
They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink.
10 For the LORD has poured out on you
The spirit of deep sleep,
And has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets;
And He has covered your heads, *namely,* the seers.

29:1 [a]That is, Jerusalem

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.
ISAIAH 30:21

How many times has that incredible verse spoken itself into my days of desperation? "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left." When I am totally unable to handle a situation and am so bewildered by it that I don't even know how to pray, my prayer becomes an opening up to the Spirit of God. Waiting is never an easy thing to do, but in these situations waiting is all there *is* to do. In time there comes a strong impression, stronger than an audible voice, saying "This is what you must do." With that nudge of illumination comes a courage beyond any human bravery and an empowering to do what God is showing me to do. When I have obeyed, I go back to being the timid person I usually am in my own strength. It only takes a few of these amazing experiences to develop a fearless trust in God who calls Himself Light.



11 The whole vision has become to you
like the words of a book that is sealed, which
men deliver to one who is literate, saying,
"Read this, please."
And he says, "I cannot, for it *is* sealed."
12 Then the book is delivered to one who
is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please."
And he says, "I am not literate."
13 Therefore the Lord said:

"Inasmuch as these people draw near
with their mouths
And honor Me with their lips,
But have removed their hearts far
from Me,
And their fear toward Me is taught by
the commandment of men,
14 Therefore, behold, I will again do a
marvelous work
Among this people,
A marvelous work and a wonder;
For the wisdom of their wise *men* shall
perish,
And the understanding of their
prudent *men* shall be hidden."

15 Woe to those who seek deep to hide
their counsel far from the LORD,
And their works are in the dark;
They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who
knows us?"
16 Surely you have things turned around!
Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay;
For shall the thing made say of him
who made it,
"He did not make me"?
Or shall the thing formed say of him
who formed it,
"He has no understanding"?

Future Recovery of Wisdom

17 *Is* it not yet a very little while
Till Lebanon shall be turned into a
fruitful field,
And the fruitful field be esteemed as
a forest?
18 In that day the deaf shall hear the
words of the book,
And the eyes of the blind shall see out
of obscurity and out of darkness.
19 The humble also shall increase *their* joy
in the LORD,
And the poor among men shall rejoice

In the Holy One of Israel.
20 For the terrible one is brought to nothing,
The scornful one is consumed,
And all who watch for iniquity are cut off—
21 Who make a man an offender by a word,
And lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate,
And turn aside the just by empty words.

22 Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob:

"Jacob shall not now be ashamed,
Nor shall his face now grow pale;
23 But when he sees his children,
The work of My hands, in his midst,
They will hallow My name,
And hallow the Holy One of Jacob,
And fear the God of Israel.
24 These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding,
And those who complained will learn doctrine."

Futile Confidence in Egypt

30 "Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD,
"Who take counsel, but not of Me,
And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit,
That they may add sin to sin;
2 Who walk to go down to Egypt,
And have not asked My advice,
To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh,
And to trust in the shadow of Egypt!
3 Therefore the strength of Pharaoh
Shall be your shame,
And trust in the shadow of Egypt
Shall be *your* humiliation.
4 For his princes were at Zoan,
And his ambassadors came to Hanes.
5 They were all ashamed of a people *who* could not benefit them,
Or be help or benefit,
But a shame and also a reproach."

6 The burden against the beasts of the South.
Through a land of trouble and anguish,
From which *came* the lioness and lion,
The viper and fiery flying serpent,
They will carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys,
And their treasures on the humps of camels,
To a people *who* shall not profit;
7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose.
Therefore I have called her
Rahab-Hem-Shebeth.[a]

A Rebellious People

8 Now go, write it before them on a tablet,
And note it on a scroll,
That it may be for time to come,
Forever and ever:
9 That this *is* a rebellious people,
Lying children,
Children *who* will not hear the law of the LORD;
10 Who say to the seers, "Do not see,"
And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things;
Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.
11 Get out of the way,
Turn aside from the path,
Cause the Holy One of Israel
To cease from before us."

12 Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:

"Because you despise this word,
And trust in oppression and perversity,
And rely on them,
13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you
Like a breach ready to fall,
A bulge in a high wall,
Whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant.
14 And He shall break it like the breaking of the potter's vessel,
Which is broken in pieces;
He shall not spare.
So there shall not be found among its fragments
A shard to take fire from the hearth,
Or to take water from the cistern."

30:7 [a]Literally *Rahab Sits Idle*

15 For thus says the Lord God, the Holy
One of Israel:

"In returning and rest you shall be saved;
In quietness and confidence shall
be your strength."
But you would not,
16 And you said, "No, for we will flee
on horses"—
Therefore you shall flee!
And, "We will ride on swift *horses*"—
Therefore those who pursue you shall
be swift!

17 One thousand *shall flee* at the threat
of one,
At the threat of five you shall flee,
Till you are left as a pole on top of
a mountain
And as a banner on a hill.

God Will Be Gracious

18 Therefore the Lord will wait, that He
may be gracious to you;
And therefore He will be exalted, that
He may have mercy on you.
For the Lord *is* a God of justice;
Blessed *are* all those who wait for Him.

19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at
Jerusalem;
You shall weep no more.
He will be very gracious to you at the
sound of your cry;
When He hears it, He will answer you.
20 And *though* the Lord gives you
The bread of adversity and the water of
affliction,
Yet your teachers will not be moved
into a corner anymore,
But your eyes shall see your teachers.
21 Your ears shall hear a word behind
you, saying,
"This *is* the way, walk in it,"
Whenever you turn to the right hand
Or whenever you turn to the left.
22 You will also defile the covering of
your images of silver,
And the ornament of your molded
images of gold.
You will throw them away as an
unclean thing;
You will say to them, "Get away!"

23 Then He will give the rain for your seed
With which you sow the ground,
And bread of the increase of the earth;
It will be fat and plentiful.
In that day your cattle will feed
In large pastures.
24 Likewise the oxen and the young
donkeys that work the ground
Will eat cured fodder,
Which has been winnowed with the
shovel and fan.
25 There will be on every high mountain
And on every high hill
Rivers *and* streams of waters,
In the day of the great slaughter,
When the towers fall.
26 Moreover the light of the moon will be
as the light of the sun,
And the light of the sun will be
sevenfold,
As the light of seven days,
In the day that the Lord binds up the
bruise of His people
And heals the stroke of their wound.

Judgment on Assyria

27 Behold, the name of the Lord comes
from afar,
Burning *with* His anger,
And *His* burden *is* heavy;
His lips are full of indignation,
And His tongue like a devouring fire.
28 His breath is like an overflowing stream,
Which reaches up to the neck,
To sift the nations with the sieve of
futility;
And *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws
of the people,
Causing *them* to err.

29 You shall have a song
As in the night *when* a holy festival
is kept,
And gladness of heart as when one
goes with a flute,
To come into the mountain of the Lord,
To the Mighty One of Israel.
30 The Lord will cause His glorious voice
to be heard,
And show the descent of His arm,
With the indignation of *His* anger
And the flame of a devouring fire,
With scattering, tempest, and hailstones.

You shall have a song as in the night when a holy festival is kept, and gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute, to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the Mighty One of Israel.

ISAIAH 30:29

31 For through the voice of the LORD
Assyria will be beaten down,
As He strikes with the rod.
32 And *in* every place where the staff
of punishment passes,
Which the LORD lays on him,
It will be with tambourines and harps;
And in battles of brandishing He will
fight with it.
33 For Tophet *was* established of old,
Yes, for the king it is prepared.
He has made *it* deep and large;
Its pyre *is* fire with much wood;
The breath of the LORD, like a stream
of brimstone,
Kindles it.

The Folly of Not Trusting God

31 Woe to those who go down to
Egypt for help,
And rely on horses,
Who trust in chariots because *they*
are many,
And in horsemen because they are
very strong,
But who do not look to the Holy One
of Israel,
Nor seek the LORD!
2 Yet He also *is* wise and will bring
disaster,
And will not call back His words,
But will arise against the house of
evildoers,
And against the help of those who
work iniquity.
3 Now the Egyptians *are* men, and
not God;
And their horses are flesh, and not
spirit.
When the LORD stretches out His hand,
Both he who helps will fall,
And he who is helped will fall down;
They all will perish together.

God Will Deliver Jerusalem

4 For thus the LORD has spoken to me:

"As a lion roars,
And a young lion over his prey
(When a multitude of shepherds is
summoned against him,
He will not be afraid of their voice
Nor be disturbed by their noise),
So the LORD of hosts will come down
To fight for Mount Zion and for its hill.
5 Like birds flying about,
So will the LORD of hosts defend
Jerusalem.
Defending, He will also deliver *it;*
Passing over, He will preserve *it.*"

6 Return *to Him* against whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. 7 For in that day every man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold—sin, which your own hands have made for yourselves.

8 "Then Assyria shall fall by a sword not
of man,
And a sword not of mankind shall
devour him.
But he shall flee from the sword,
And his young men shall become
forced labor.
9 He shall cross over to his stronghold
for fear,
And his princes shall be afraid of the
banner,"
Says the LORD,
Whose fire *is* in Zion
And whose furnace *is* in Jerusalem.

A Reign of Righteousness

32 Behold, a king will reign in
righteousness,
And princes will rule with justice.
2 A man will be as a hiding place from
the wind,
And a cover from the tempest,
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a
weary land.
3 The eyes of those who see will not
be dim,

And the ears of those who hear will
listen.
4 Also the heart of the rash will
understand knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerers will
be ready to speak plainly.

5 The foolish person will no longer be
called generous,
Nor the miser said *to be* bountiful;
6 For the foolish person will speak
foolishness,
And his heart will work iniquity:
To practice ungodliness,
To utter error against the LORD,
To keep the hungry unsatisfied,
And he will cause the drink of the
thirsty to fail.
7 Also the schemes of the schemer
are evil;
He devises wicked plans
To destroy the poor with lying words,
Even when the needy speaks justice.
8 But a generous man devises generous
things,
And by generosity he shall stand.

Consequences of Complacency

9 Rise up, you women who are at ease,
Hear my voice;
You complacent daughters,
Give ear to my speech.
10 In a year and *some* days
You will be troubled, you complacent
women;
For the vintage will fail,
The gathering will not come.
11 Tremble, you *women* who are at ease;
Be troubled, you complacent ones;
Strip yourselves, make yourselves
bare,
And gird *sackcloth* on *your* waists.

12 People shall mourn upon their breasts
For the pleasant fields, for the
fruitful vine.



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. | ISAIAH 32:17, 18

When she was little we used to call Paula the "Black-eyed Pea" because of her expressive black eyes. She was a very little girl when she gave me her pointed opinion about some drop-in guests who had just left our home.

"They broke the air," she observed, black eyes snapping in exasperation. She was right. There was a certain peaceful home atmosphere that had been shattered, like a rock hitting a windowpane, when they arrived. It made me wonder about their true motives.

When the Lord has command of the inner life, there is a sense of the person's spirit and personality having rounded corners, not jagged edges that can "break the air" around other people. Today I'm praying for rounded corners for my spirit. *You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you (Is. 26:3).*

13 On the land of my people will come up
thorns *and* briers,
Yes, on all the happy homes *in* the
joyous city;
14 Because the palaces will be forsaken,
The bustling city will be deserted.
The forts and towers will become lairs
forever,
A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of
flocks—
15 Until the Spirit is poured upon us from
on high,
And the wilderness becomes a fruitful
field,
And the fruitful field is counted as
a forest.

The Peace of God's Reign

16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
And righteousness remain in the
fruitful field.
17 The work of righteousness will be peace,
And the effect of righteousness,
quietness and assurance forever.
18 My people will dwell in a peaceful
habitation,
In secure dwellings, and in quiet
resting places,
19 Though hail comes down on the forest,
And the city is brought low in
humiliation.

20 Blessed *are* you who sow beside
all waters,
Who send out freely the feet of the ox
and the donkey.

A Prayer in Deep Distress

33 Woe to you who plunder, though
you *have* not *been* plundered;
And you who deal treacherously,
though they have not dealt
treacherously with you!
When you cease plundering,
You will be plundered;
When you make an end of dealing
treacherously,
They will deal treacherously with you.

2 O LORD, be gracious to us;
We have waited for You.
Be their[a] arm every morning,
Our salvation also in the time of trouble.
3 At the noise of the tumult the people
shall flee;
When You lift Yourself up, the nations
shall be scattered;
4 And Your plunder shall be gathered
Like the gathering of the caterpillar;
As the running to and fro of locusts,
He shall run upon them.

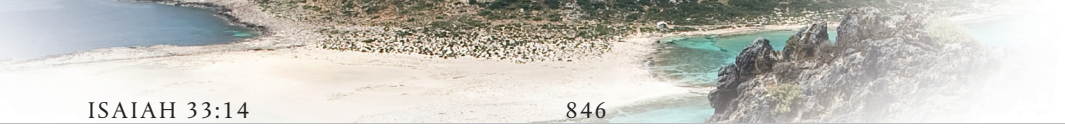
5 The LORD is exalted, for He dwells
on high;
He has filled Zion with justice and
righteousness.
6 Wisdom and knowledge will be the
stability of your times,
And the strength of salvation;
The fear of the LORD *is* His treasure.

7 Surely their valiant ones shall cry
outside,
The ambassadors of peace shall weep
bitterly.
8 The highways lie waste,
The traveling man ceases.
He has broken the covenant,
He has despised the cities,[a]
He regards no man.
9 The earth mourns *and* languishes,
Lebanon is shamed *and* shriveled;
Sharon is like a wilderness,
And Bashan and Carmel shake off
their fruits.

Impending Judgment on Zion

10 "Now I will rise," says the LORD;
"Now I will be exalted,
Now I will lift Myself up.
11 You shall conceive chaff,
You shall bring forth stubble;
Your breath, *as* fire, shall devour you.
12 And the people shall be *like* the
burnings of lime;
Like thorns cut up they shall be burned
in the fire.
13 Hear, you *who are* afar off, what I
have done;
And you *who are* near, acknowledge
My might."

33:2 [a]Septuagint omits *their;* Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *our.*
33:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls read *witnesses;* Septuagint omits *cities;* Targum reads *They have been removed from their cities.*



14 The sinners in Zion are afraid;
Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites:
"Who among us shall dwell with the
devouring fire?
Who among us shall dwell with
everlasting burnings?"
15 He who walks righteously and speaks
uprightly,
He who despises the gain of oppressions,
Who gestures with his hands, refusing
bribes,
Who stops his ears from hearing of
bloodshed,
And shuts his eyes from seeing evil:
16 He will dwell on high;
His place of defense *will be* the fortress
of rocks;
Bread will be given him,
His water *will be* sure.

The Land of the Majestic King

17 Your eyes will see the King in His beauty;
They will see the land that is very far off.
18 Your heart will meditate on terror:
"Where *is* the scribe?
Where *is* he who weighs?
Where *is* he who counts the towers?"
19 You will not see a fierce people,
A people of obscure speech, beyond
perception,
Of a stammering tongue *that you*
cannot understand.

20 Look upon Zion, the city of our
appointed feasts;
Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet
home,
A tabernacle *that* will not be taken down;
Not one of its stakes will ever be
removed,
Nor will any of its cords be broken.
21 But there the majestic LORD *will be*
for us
A place of broad rivers *and* streams,
In which no galley with oars will sail,
Nor majestic ships pass by
22 (For the LORD *is* our Judge,
The LORD *is* our Lawgiver,
The LORD *is* our King;
He will save us);
23 Your tackle is loosed,
They could not strengthen their mast,
They could not spread the sail.
Then the prey of great plunder is
divided;
The lame take the prey.
24 And the inhabitant will not say, "I am
sick";
The people who dwell in it *will be*
forgiven *their* iniquity.

Judgment on the Nations

34 Come near, you nations, to hear;
And heed, you people!
Let the earth hear, and all that is
in it,
The world and all things that come
forth from it.
2 For the indignation of the LORD is
against all nations,
And *His* fury against all their armies;
He has utterly destroyed them,
He has given them over to the
slaughter.
3 Also their slain shall be thrown out;
Their stench shall rise from their
corpses,
And the mountains shall be melted
with their blood.
4 All the host of heaven shall be
dissolved,
And the heavens shall be rolled up
like a scroll;
All their host shall fall down
As the leaf falls from the vine,
And as *fruit* falling from a fig tree.

5 "For My sword shall be bathed in
heaven;
Indeed it shall come down on Edom,
And on the people of My curse, for
judgment.
6 The sword of the LORD is filled with
blood,
It is made overflowing with fatness,
With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah,
And a great slaughter in the land
of Edom.
7 The wild oxen shall come down with
them,
And the young bulls with the mighty
bulls;
Their land shall be soaked with blood,
And their dust saturated with fatness."

8 For *it is* the day of the LORD's vengeance,
The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
9 Its streams shall be turned into pitch,
And its dust into brimstone;
Its land shall become burning pitch.
10 It shall not be quenched night or day;
Its smoke shall ascend forever.
From generation to generation it shall lie waste;
No one shall pass through it forever and ever.
11 But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it,
Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.
And He shall stretch out over it
The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.
12 They shall call its nobles to the kingdom,
But none *shall be* there, and all its princes shall be nothing.

13 And thorns shall come up in its palaces,
Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
It shall be a habitation of jackals,
A courtyard for ostriches.
14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals,
And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion;
Also the night creature shall rest there,
And find for herself a place of rest.
15 There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay *eggs*
And hatch, and gather *them* under her shadow;
There also shall the hawks be gathered,
Every one with her mate.

16 "Search from the book of the LORD, and read:
Not one of these shall fail;
Not one shall lack her mate.
For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them.
17 He has cast the lot for them,
And His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line.
They shall possess it forever;
From generation to generation they shall dwell in it."

It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the excellency of our God.
ISAIAH 35:2

The Future Glory of Zion

35 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,
And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;
2 It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
Even with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
The excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen the weak hands,
And make firm the feeble knees.
4 Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance,
With the recompense of God;
He will come and save you."

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb sing.
For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,
And streams in the desert.

Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.
ISAIAH 35:6

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
ISAIAH 35:10

7 The parched ground shall become a pool,
And the thirsty land springs of water;
In the habitation of jackals, where each lay,
There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

8 A highway shall be there, and a road,
And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it,
But it *shall be* for others.
Whoever walks the road, although a fool,
Shall not go astray.
9 No lion shall be there,
Nor shall *any* ravenous beast go up on it;
It shall not be found there.
But the redeemed shall walk *there,*
10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness,
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD

36 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah *that* Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, there shall be grass with reeds and rushes. | ISAIAH 35:7

My son-in-law was pursuing an occupation which, to the natural eye, did not seem promising. He was convinced that it was of the Lord and that the Lord had gifted him to be able to perform well in that line of work. Those who loved him were fearful that he would fail and would not be able to support his family if he followed the course he was on. Because of their concern for him, he received more silence than encouragement from his wider family. Some actually tried to discourage him by offering him alternatives. Although I, too, had secret suspicions about his desires, I believe the Lord guided me to this verse to share with him to encourage his heart. In fact, I had it made into a plaque which I presented to him. The verse took on meaning for me when I saw the expression "parched ground" translated by the word "mirage." "The mirage shall become a pool." To my heart that was saying, "What appears now as a dream, a vision, some intangible thing, will someday become reality. The mirage will become a pool." By God's faithfulness the mirage has become a pool. We were all surprised into praise for God.

took them. 2Then the king of Assyria sent *the* Rabshakeh[a] with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field. 3And Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

4Then *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust? 5I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but *they are* mere words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? 6Look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

7"But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' *is it* not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar'?" ' 8Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! 9How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? 10Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'"

11Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it;* and do not speak to us in Hebrew[a] in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall."

12But *the* Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

13Then *the* Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! 14Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; 15nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ' 16Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me *by a* present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; 17until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. 18*Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 19Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? 20Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?'"

21But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." 22Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the* Rabshakeh.

Isaiah Assures Deliverance

37 And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it,* that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 3And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day *is* a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there is* no strength to bring them forth. 4It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

5So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6And Isaiah said to them, "Thus

36:2 [a]A title, probably *Chief of Staff* or *Governor* **36:11** [a]Literally *Judean*

you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 7Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." '"

Sennacherib's Threat and Hezekiah's Prayer

8Then *the* Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. 9And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come out to make war with you." So when he heard *it,* he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10"Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." 11Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? 12Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who *were* in Telassar? 13Where *is* the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?'"

14And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying: 16"O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, *the One* who dwells *between* the cherubim, You *are* God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 17Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. 18Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, 19and have cast their gods into the fire; for they *were* not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. 20Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD, You alone."

The Word of the LORD Concerning Sennacherib

21Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, 22this *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

"The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
Has shaken *her* head behind your back!

23 "Whom have you reproached and
blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised
your voice,
And lifted up your eyes on high?
Against the Holy One of Israel.
24 By your servants you have reproached
the Lord,
And said, 'By the multitude of my
chariots
I have come up to the height of the
mountains,
To the limits of Lebanon;
I will cut down its tall cedars
And its choice cypress trees;
I will enter its farthest height,
To its fruitful forest.
25 I have dug and drunk water,
And with the soles of my feet I have
dried up
All the brooks of defense.'

26 "Did you not hear long ago
How I made it,
From ancient times that I formed it?
Now I have brought it to pass,
That you should be
For crushing fortified cities *into* heaps
of ruins.
27 Therefore their inhabitants *had* little
power;
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field
And the green herb,
As the grass on the housetops
And *grain* blighted before it is grown.

28 "But I know your dwelling place,
Your going out and your coming in,
And your rage against Me.

29 Because your rage against Me and
your tumult
Have come up to My ears,
Therefore I will put My hook in
your nose
And My bridle in your lips,
And I will turn you back
By the way which you came." '

30 "This *shall be* a sign to you:

You shall eat this year such as grows
of itself,
And the second year what springs from
the same;
Also in the third year sow and reap,
Plant vineyards and eat the fruit
of them.
31 And the remnant who have escaped of
the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward.
32 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant,
And those who escape from Mount Zion.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

33 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria:

'He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield,
Nor build a siege mound against it.
34 By the way that he came,
By the same shall he return;
And he shall not come into this city,'
Says the LORD.
35 'For I will defend this city, to save it
For My own sake and for My servant
David's sake.'"

Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

36 Then the angel[a] of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. 37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home,* and remained at Nineveh. 38 Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah's Life Extended

38 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'"

2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, 3 and said, "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done *what is* good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 And the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying, 5 "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. 6 I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city." ' 7 And this *is* the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken: 8 "Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.

9 This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:

10 I said,
"In the prime of my life
I shall go to the gates of Sheol;
I am deprived of the remainder of my
years."
11 I said,
"I shall not see YAH,
The LORD[a] in the land of the living;
I shall observe man no more among
the inhabitants of the world.[b]
12 My life span is gone,
Taken from me like a shepherd's tent;
I have cut off my life like a weaver.
He cuts me off from the loom;
From day until night You make an end
of me.

37:36 [a]Or *Angel* **38:11** [a]Hebrew *YAH, YAH* [b]Following some Hebrew manuscripts; Masoretic Text and Vulgate read *rest;* Septuagint omits *among the inhabitants of the world;* Targum reads *land.*

My eyes fail from looking upward.
ISAIAH 38:14

If my eyes fail, oh, let it be "from looking upward"! Let the junk of life force me to look to Jesus. Lord, forbid that I lose my eyesight from using my eyes to sort through the dump and what has been deposited there. I would strain my eyes, instead trying to see Jesus Himself descending from heaven in a cloud (Matt. 24:30). Lord, my body is kept here by the pull of gravity. Release my soul from the pull of earth. Let my deep longings stay fixed on heaven, not on the things that kill the spirit and erode the joy of your sweet presence.



The LORD was ready to save me; therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of the LORD.
ISAIAH 38:20

13 I have considered until morning—
Like a lion,
So He breaks all my bones;
From day until night You make an end of me.
14 Like a crane *or* a swallow, so I chattered;
I mourned like a dove;
My eyes fail *from looking* upward.
O LORD,[a] I am oppressed;
Undertake for me!

15 "What shall I say?
He has both spoken to me,[a]
And He Himself has done *it.*
I shall walk carefully all my years
In the bitterness of my soul.
16 O Lord, by these *things men* live;
And in all these *things is* the life of my spirit;
So You will restore me and make me live.
17 Indeed *it was* for *my own* peace
That I had great bitterness;
But You have lovingly *delivered* my soul from the pit of corruption,
For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.
18 For Sheol cannot thank You,
Death cannot praise You;
Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.
19 The living, the living man, he shall praise You,
As I *do* this day;
The father shall make known Your truth to the children.

20 "The LORD *was ready* to save me;
Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments
All the days of our life, in the house of the LORD."

38:14 [a]Following Bomberg; Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls read *Lord.* **38:15** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Targum read *And shall I say to Him;* Septuagint omits first half of this verse.

21 Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a
lump of figs, and apply *it* as a poultice on
the boil, and he shall recover."
22 And Hezekiah had said, "What *is* the
sign that I shall go up to the house of the
LORD?"

The Babylonian Envoys

39 At that time Merodach-Baladan[a]
the son of Baladan, king of Babylon,
sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for
he heard that he had been sick and had
recovered. 2 And Hezekiah was pleased
with them, and showed them the house
of his treasures—the silver and gold, the
spices and precious ointment, and all his
armory—all that was found among his
treasures. There was nothing in his house
or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did
not show them.
3 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King
Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these
men say, and from where did they come to
you?"
So Hezekiah said, "They came to me
from a far country, from Babylon."
4 And he said, "What have they seen in
your house?"
So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen
all that *is* in my house; there is nothing
among my treasures that I have not shown
them."
5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear
the word of the LORD of hosts: 6 'Behold, the
days are coming when all that *is* in your
house, and what your fathers have accu-
mulated until this day, shall be carried to
Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the
LORD. 7 'And they shall take away *some* of your
sons who will descend from you, whom you
will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the
palace of the king of Babylon.'"
8 So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word
of the LORD which you have spoken *is*
good!" For he said, "At least there will be
peace and truth in my days."

God's People Are Comforted

40 "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!"
Says your God.
2 "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry
out to her,
That her warfare is ended,
That her iniquity is pardoned;
For she has received from the LORD's
hand
Double for all her sins."

3 The voice of one crying in the
wilderness:
"Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make straight in the desert[a]
A highway for our God.
4 Every valley shall be exalted
And every mountain and hill
brought low;
The crooked places shall be made
straight
And the rough places smooth;
5 The glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
And all flesh shall see *it* together;
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

6 The voice said, "Cry out!"
And he[a] said, "What shall I cry?"

"All flesh *is* grass,
And all its loveliness *is* like the flower
of the field.
7 The grass withers, the flower fades,
Because the breath of the LORD blows
upon it;
Surely the people *are* grass.
8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever."

9 O Zion,
You who bring good tidings,
Get up into the high mountain;
O Jerusalem,
You who bring good tidings,
Lift up your voice with strength,
Lift *it* up, be not afraid;
Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold
your God!"

10 Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with
a strong *hand*,
And His arm shall rule for Him;
Behold, His reward *is* with Him,
And His work before Him.
11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd;
He will gather the lambs with His arm,
And carry *them* in His bosom,

39:1 [a]Spelled *Berodach-Baladan* in 2 Kings 20:12 **40:3** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint omits *in the desert*. **40:6** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *I*.

Fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you,
yes, I will help you.
I will uphold you with
My righteous right hand.
ISAIAH 41:10

The Lord is fiercely present, though some have painted Him as a blithe spirit, easily offended and quick to dissipate like some mist in the scorching sun. He is powerfully and fiercely present. In times of fear, He is present and fear has no power when we focus on that presence. In times of doubt, He is present, nudging us to knowing, crowding us to the certainty of Himself. When we are full of joy and confidence, He is there in the festival, whispering that He, not we ourselves, is the joy pure and essential. He is there. He is present. He *is*. His presence fills the whole earth, and He is not fragile.



And gently lead those who are with young.

12 Who has measured the waters[a] in the hollow of His hand,
Measured heaven with a span
And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?
Weighed the mountains in scales
And the hills in a balance?
13 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,
Or *as* His counselor has taught Him?
14 With whom did He take counsel, and *who* instructed Him,
And taught Him in the path of justice?
Who taught Him knowledge,
And showed Him the way of understanding?

15 Behold, the nations *are* as a drop in a bucket,
And are counted as the small dust on the scales;
Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing.
16 And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn,
Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.
17 All nations before Him *are* as nothing,
And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.

18 To whom then will you liken God?
Or what likeness will you compare to Him?
19 The workman molds an image,
The goldsmith overspreads it with gold,
And the silversmith casts silver chains.
20 Whoever *is* too impoverished for *such* a contribution
Chooses a tree *that* will not rot;
He seeks for himself a skillful workman
To prepare a carved image *that* will not totter.

21 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

40:12 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls read *waters of the sea;* Targum reads *waters of the world.*

22 *It is* He who sits above the circle of the earth,
And its inhabitants *are* like grasshoppers,
Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.
23 He brings the princes to nothing;
He makes the judges of the earth useless.

24 Scarcely shall they be planted,
Scarcely shall they be sown,
Scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth,
When He will also blow on them,
And they will wither,
And the whirlwind will take them away like stubble.

25 "To whom then will you liken Me,
Or *to whom* shall I be equal?" says the Holy One.
26 Lift up your eyes on high,
And see who has created these *things,*
Who brings out their host by number;
He calls them all by name,
By the greatness of His might
And the strength of *His* power;
Not one is missing.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob,
And speak, O Israel:
"My way is hidden from the LORD,
And my just claim is passed over by my God"?
28 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, the LORD,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Neither faints nor is weary.
His understanding is unsearchable.
29 He gives power to the weak,
And to *those who have* no might He increases strength.
30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall,
31 But those who wait on the LORD
Shall renew *their* strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.

Israel Assured of God's Help

41 "Keep silence before Me, O coast lands,
And let the people renew *their* strength!
Let them come near, then let them speak;
Let us come near together for judgment.

2 "Who raised up one from the east?
Who in righteousness called him to His feet?
Who gave the nations before him,
And made *him* rule over kings?
Who gave *them* as the dust *to* his sword,
As driven stubble to his bow?
3 Who pursued them, *and* passed safely
By the way *that* he had not gone with his feet?
4 Who has performed and done *it,*
Calling the generations from the beginning?
'I, the LORD, am the first;
And with the last I *am* He.'"

5 The coastlands saw *it* and feared,
The ends of the earth were afraid;
They drew near and came.
6 Everyone helped his neighbor,
And said to his brother,
"Be of good courage!"
7 So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith;
He who smooths *with* the hammer *inspired* him who strikes the anvil,
Saying, "It *is* ready for the soldering";
Then he fastened it with pegs,
That it might not totter.

8 "But you, Israel, *are* My servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
The descendants of Abraham My friend.
9 *You* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,
And called from its farthest regions,
And said to you,
'You *are* My servant,
I have chosen you and have not cast you away:
10 Fear not, for I *am* with you;
Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

11 "Behold, all those who were incensed
against you
Shall be ashamed and disgraced;
They shall be as nothing,
And those who strive with you shall
perish.
12 You shall seek them and not find them—
Those who contended with you.
Those who war against you
Shall be as nothing,
As a nonexistent thing.
13 For I, the LORD your God, will hold
your right hand,
Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'

14 "Fear not, you worm Jacob,
You men of Israel!
I will help you," says the LORD
And your Redeemer, the Holy One of
Israel.
15 "Behold, I will make you into a new
threshing sledge with sharp teeth;
You shall thresh the mountains and
beat *them* small,
And make the hills like chaff.
16 You shall winnow them, the wind shall
carry them away,
And the whirlwind shall scatter them;
You shall rejoice in the LORD,
And glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17 "The poor and needy seek water, but
there is none,
Their tongues fail for thirst.
I, the LORD, will hear them;
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake
them.
18 I will open rivers in desolate heights,
And fountains in the midst of the valleys;
I will make the wilderness a pool of
water,
And the dry land springs of water.
19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar
and the acacia tree,
The myrtle and the oil tree;
I will set in the desert the cypress tree
and the pine
And the box tree together,
20 That they may see and know,
And consider and understand together,
That the hand of the LORD has done this,
And the Holy One of Israel has
created it.

The Futility of Idols

21 "Present your case," says the LORD.
"Bring forth your strong *reasons,*" says
the King of Jacob.
22 "Let them bring forth and show us what
will happen;
Let them show the former things, what
they *were,*
That we may consider them,
And know the latter end of them;
Or declare to us things to come.
23 Show the things that are to come
hereafter,
That we may know that you *are* gods;
Yes, do good or do evil,
That we may be dismayed and see *it*
together.
24 Indeed you *are* nothing,
And your work *is* nothing;
He who chooses you *is* an
abomination.

25 "I have raised up one from the north,
And he shall come;
From the rising of the sun he shall call
on My name;
And he shall come against princes as
though mortar,
As the potter treads clay.
26 Who has declared from the beginning,
that we may know?
And former times, that we may say, '*He
is* righteous'?
Surely *there is* no one who shows,
Surely *there is* no one who declares,
Surely *there is* no one who hears your
words.
27 The first time *I said* to Zion,
'Look, there they are!'
And I will give to Jerusalem one who
brings good tidings.
28 For I looked, and *there was* no man;
I looked among them, but *there was* no
counselor,
Who, when I asked of them, could
answer a word.
29 Indeed they *are* all worthless;[a]
Their works *are* nothing;
Their molded images *are* wind and
confusion.

41:29 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls, Syriac, and Targum read *nothing;* Septuagint omits the first line.

The Servant of the LORD

42 "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold,
My Elect One *in whom* My soul
delights!
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the
Gentiles.
2 He will not cry out, nor raise *His voice,*
Nor cause His voice to be heard in
the street.
3 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.
4 He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till He has established justice in
the earth;
And the coastlands shall wait for His law."

5 Thus says God the LORD,
Who created the heavens and
stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and that
which comes from it,
Who gives breath to the people on it,
And spirit to those who walk on it:
6 "I, the LORD, have called You in
righteousness,
And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You and give You as a
covenant to the people,
As a light to the Gentiles,
7 To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the prison,
Those who sit in darkness from the
prison house.
8 I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.
9 Behold, the former things have come
to pass,
And new things I declare;
Before they spring forth I tell you
of them."

Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them!
ISAIAH 42:10

Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.
ISAIAH 42:11

Praise to the LORD

10 Sing to the LORD a new song,
And His praise from the ends of
the earth,
You who go down to the sea, and all
that is in it,
You coastlands and you inhabitants
of them!
11 Let the wilderness and its cities lift up
their voice,
The villages *that* Kedar inhabits.
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing,
Let them shout from the top of the
mountains.
12 Let them give glory to the LORD,
And declare His praise in the coastlands.
13 The LORD shall go forth like a mighty
man;
He shall stir up *His* zeal like a man of war.
He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud;
He shall prevail against His enemies.

Promise of the LORD's Help

14 "I have held My peace a long time,
I have been still and restrained Myself.
Now I will cry like a woman in labor,
I will pant and gasp at once.
15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills,
And dry up all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers coastlands,
And I will dry up the pools.
16 I will bring the blind by a way they did
not know;
I will lead them in paths they have not
known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them,
And not forsake them.
17 They shall be turned back,
They shall be greatly ashamed,
Who trust in carved images,

Through

When I saw what lay before me,
"Lord," I cried, "what will You do?"
I thought He would just remove it,
But He gently led me through.
Without fire, there's no refining;
Without pain there's no relief.
Without flood there's no rescue;
Without testing, no belief.

Through the water, through the flood,
Through the fire, through the blood,
Through the pain and through the glory;
"Through" will always tell the story.

I knew He could part the waters,
At his voice, a mountain move;
But His love would crowd me to Him—
Through my need His presence prove.
"Come, My child, I'll take you through it;
When you faint, I'll carry you.
Cast on Me your fear and weakness—
Trust My heart; I'll take you through."

Through the water, through the flood,
Through the fire, through the blood,
Through the pain and through the glory;
"Through" will always tell the story.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.

ISAIAH 43:1, 2

Over all these years of singing, writing, and working with people, we have heard one word over and over. It is a word mentioned in almost every letter we've received; we hear it from folks who come to speak to us after concerts and in retreats where I have spoken. The word is *through*. "The songs got me *through*."

How often we pray that God will remove or fix whatever we are going *through*: illness, broken relationships, sadness, estrangement, setbacks, disappointments in business or vocation, loss of hoped-for opportunities. We gather in each other's homes or churches and ask for prayer that God will make the problems go away, that He will heal our bodies, make our spouses love us, change our children, give us that promotion, or send an answer to financial difficulties.

All of these requests and supplications are legitimate subjects of prayer; God wants us to bring to Him anything that troubles us. We are told in Scripture to cast all our anxiety on him because he cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7). Yet we know too that the things we so often ask Him to remove from us are the very things He uses in our lives to grow in us the qualities we most desire and He desires for us.

We know, for example, that no one really wants the life our unbridled human nature would precipitate. Galatians lists what a selfish life without the Spirit looks like: "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries [orgies]" (5:19–21). All of these are filling homes, neighborhoods, the workplace, and governments with pain and war. No one in her right mind would choose such a life. No one dreams of a marriage or a house or a family or a community filled with such things.

Instead, in our heart of hearts we long to go home to a place filled with these qualities: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23). But how do we get these qualities? Often the very things we ask God to remove or to fix are the very things He is using to bring out in us the qualities for which we long. We become patient, for example, by waiting, not by instant solutions. We get peace by relaxing in His ways, knowing they're higher, deeper, more enduring than our ways (Is. 55:9–11). We become faithful by sticking it out when it would be easier for the moment to throw in the towel and walk away.

We become good and kind and gentle by not reacting to slights, not giving the one who has hurt us what he or she has coming. Going *through* stuff ourselves gives us insights into what others have gone through, the abuse they may have endured, the disappointments they've had, the opportunities they may have lost.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.
"For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts."
(Isaiah 55:8, 9)

There is that eternal perspective again—the big picture.

"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth. . . .
So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (vv. 10, 11)

We can be sure, then, that God is always up to something in our lives and it is *good* and it is *eternal*. What the earth is after in us is immediate, transient and, ultimately, often destructive. Selfishness is always destructive.

When God asks something of us, when He sends His word to the specifics of our days—His commandments, His promises, His blessings, His warnings—it is always to "prosper" us, but not always in the value system of earth. He always is in the business of prospering us in eternal terms—in qualities that will endure.

So no matter what we are going *through*, we can be certain that God loves us too much to let us settle for the petty successes of earth when He wants to open the storehouse of His unsearchable riches. He has started something in us beyond our wildest imagination, and He will complete what He has started if we'll just let Him take us *through*.

Who say to the molded images,
'You *are* our gods.'

18 "Hear, you deaf;
And look, you blind, that you may see.
19 Who *is* blind but My servant,
Or deaf as My messenger *whom* I send?
Who *is* blind as *he who is* perfect,
And blind as the LORD's servant?
20 Seeing many things, but you do not observe;
Opening the ears, but he does not hear."

Israel's Obstinate Disobedience

21 The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake;
He will exalt the law and make *it* honorable.
22 But this *is* a people robbed and plundered;
All of them are snared in holes,
And they are hidden in prison houses;
They are for prey, and no one delivers;
For plunder, and no one says, "Restore!"

23 Who among you will give ear to this?
Who will listen and hear for the time to come?
24 Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to the robbers?
Was it not the LORD,
He against whom we have sinned?
For they would not walk in His ways,
Nor were they obedient to His law.
25 Therefore He has poured on him the fury of His anger
And the strength of battle;
It has set him on fire all around,
Yet he did not know;
And it burned him,
Yet he did not take *it* to heart.

The Redeemer of Israel

43 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called *you* by your name;
You *are* Mine.
2 When you pass through the waters, I *will be* with you;
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,
Nor shall the flame scorch you.
3 For I *am* the LORD your God,
The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I gave Egypt for your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in your place.
4 Since you were precious in My sight,
You have been honored,
And I have loved you;
Therefore I will give men for you,
And people for your life.
5 Fear not, for I *am* with you;
I will bring your descendants from the east,
And gather you from the west;
6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!'
Bring My sons from afar,
And My daughters from the ends of the earth—
7 Everyone who is called by My name,
Whom I have created for My glory;
I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

8 Bring out the blind people who have eyes,
And the deaf who have ears.
9 Let all the nations be gathered together,
And let the people be assembled.
Who among them can declare this,
And show us former things?
Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified;
Or let them hear and say, "*It is* truth."
10 "You *are* My witnesses," says the LORD,
"And My servant whom I have chosen,
That you may know and believe Me,
And understand that I *am* He.
Before Me there was no God formed,
Nor shall there be after Me.
11 I, *even* I, *am* the LORD,
And besides Me *there is* no savior.
12 I have declared and saved,
I have proclaimed,
And *there was* no foreign *god* among you;
Therefore you *are* My witnesses,"
Says the LORD, "that I *am* God.
13 Indeed before the day *was,* I *am* He;

And *there is* no one who can deliver out
of My hand;
I work, and who will reverse it?"

14 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
"For your sake I will send to Babylon,
And bring them all down as fugitives—
The Chaldeans, who rejoice in their
ships.
15 I *am* the LORD, your Holy One,
The Creator of Israel, your King."

16 Thus says the LORD, who makes a way
in the sea
And a path through the mighty waters,
17 Who brings forth the chariot and horse,
The army and the power
(They shall lie down together, they
shall not rise;
They are extinguished, they are
quenched like a wick):
18 "Do not remember the former things,
Nor consider the things of old.
19 Behold, I will do a new thing,
Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
I will even make a road in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert.
20 The beast of the field will honor Me,
The jackals and the ostriches,
Because I give waters in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert,
To give drink to My people, My chosen.
21 This people I have formed for Myself;
They shall declare My praise.

Pleading with Unfaithful Israel

22 "But you have not called upon Me,
O Jacob;
And you have been weary of Me,
O Israel.
23 You have not brought Me the sheep
for your burnt offerings,
Nor have you honored Me with your
sacrifices.
I have not caused you to serve with
grain offerings,
Nor wearied you with incense.
24 You have bought Me no sweet cane
with money,
Nor have you satisfied Me with the fat
of your sacrifices;
But you have burdened Me with your
sins,
You have wearied Me with your
iniquities.

25 "I, *even* I, *am* He who blots out your
transgressions for My own sake;
And I will not remember your sins.
26 Put Me in remembrance;
Let us contend together;
State your *case,* that you may be
acquitted.
27 Your first father sinned,
And your mediators have transgressed
against Me.
28 Therefore I will profane the princes of
the sanctuary;
I will give Jacob to the curse,
And Israel to reproaches.

God's Blessing on Israel

44 "Yet hear now, O Jacob My servant,
And Israel whom I have chosen.
2 Thus says the LORD who made you
And formed you from the womb, *who*
will help you:
'Fear not, O Jacob My servant;
And you, Jeshurun, whom I have
chosen.
3 For I will pour water on him who is
thirsty,
And floods on the dry ground;
I will pour My Spirit on your
descendants,
And My blessing on your offspring;
4 They will spring up among the grass
Like willows by the watercourses.'
5 One will say, 'I *am* the LORD's';
Another will call *himself* by the name of
Jacob;
Another will write *with* his hand, 'The
LORD's,'
And name *himself* by the name of Israel.

There Is No Other God

6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,
And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
'I *am* the First and I *am* the Last;
Besides Me *there is* no God.
7 And who can proclaim as I do?
Then let him declare it and set it in
order for Me,
Since I appointed the ancient people.

And the things that are coming and
shall come,
Let them show these to them.
8 Do not fear, nor be afraid;
Have I not told you from that time, and
declared *it?*
You *are* My witnesses.
Is there a God besides Me?
Indeed *there is* no other Rock;
I know not *one.*'"

Idolatry Is Foolishness

9 Those who make an image, all of them
are useless,
And their precious things shall not
profit;
They *are* their own witnesses;
They neither see nor know, that they
may be ashamed.
10 Who would form a god or mold an
image
That profits him nothing?
11 Surely all his companions would be
ashamed;
And the workmen, they *are* mere men.
Let them all be gathered together,
Let them stand up;
Yet they shall fear,
They shall be ashamed together.

12 The blacksmith with the tongs works
one in the coals,
Fashions it with hammers,
And works it with the strength of his
arms.
Even so, he is hungry, and his strength
fails;
He drinks no water and is faint.

13 The craftsman stretches out *his* rule,
He marks one out with chalk;
He fashions it with a plane,
He marks it out with the compass,
And makes it like the figure of a man,
According to the beauty of a man, that
it may remain in the house.
14 He cuts down cedars for himself,
And takes the cypress and the oak;
He secures *it* for himself among the
trees of the forest.
He plants a pine, and the rain
nourishes *it.*
15 Then it shall be for a man to burn,
For he will take some of it and warm
himself;
Yes, he kindles *it* and bakes bread;
Indeed he makes a god and worships
it;
He makes it a carved image, and falls
down to it.
16 He burns half of it in the fire;
With this half he eats meat;
He roasts a roast, and is satisfied.
He even warms *himself* and says,
"Ah! I am warm,
I have seen the fire."
17 And the rest of it he makes into a god,
His carved image.
He falls down before it and worships *it,*
Prays to it and says,
"Deliver me, for you *are* my god!"

18 They do not know nor understand;
For He has shut their eyes, so that they
cannot see,
And their hearts, so that they cannot
understand.
19 And no one considers in his heart,
Nor *is there* knowledge nor
understanding to say,
"I have burned half of it in the fire,
Yes, I have also baked bread on its
coals;
I have roasted meat and eaten *it;*
And shall I make the rest of it an
abomination?
Shall I fall down before a block of
wood?"
20 He feeds on ashes;
A deceived heart has turned him aside;
And he cannot deliver his soul,
Nor say, "*Is there* not a lie in my right
hand?"

Israel Is Not Forgotten

21 "Remember these, O Jacob,
And Israel, for you *are* My servant;
I have formed you, you *are* My servant;
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by
Me!
22 I have blotted out, like a thick cloud,
your transgressions,
And like a cloud, your sins.
Return to Me, for I have redeemed
you."

23 Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done *it!*
Shout, you lower parts of the earth;
Break forth into singing, you
mountains,
O forest, and every tree in it!
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
And glorified Himself in Israel.

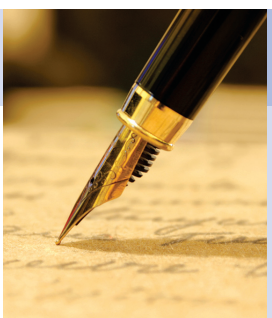
Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.
ISAIAH 44:23

Judah Will Be Restored

24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
And He who formed you from the womb:
"I *am* the LORD, who makes all *things,*
Who stretches out the heavens all alone,
Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;
25 Who frustrates the signs of the
babblers,
And drives diviners mad;
Who turns wise men backward,
And makes their knowledge
foolishness;
26 Who confirms the word of His servant,
And performs the counsel of His
messengers;
Who says to Jerusalem, 'You shall be
inhabited,'
To the cities of Judah, 'You shall be
built,'
And I will raise up her waste places;
27 Who says to the deep, 'Be dry!
And I will dry up your rivers';
28 Who says of Cyrus, '*He is* My shepherd,
And he shall perform all My pleasure,
Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built,"
And to the temple, "Your foundation
shall be laid." '

Cyrus, God's Instrument

45 "Thus says the LORD to His anointed,
To Cyrus, whose right hand I
have held—
To subdue nations before him
And loose the armor of kings,
To open before him the double doors,
So that the gates will not be shut:
2 'I will go before you



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, "Seek Me in vain"; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. | ISAIAH 45:19

We have all rejoiced in promises the Lord has given. We quote, "Thus says the Lord," and we take a rugged stand on the vows God has recorded for us. This passage tells us not what God said, but what He has never said. This is not quoting a promise; this is an argument from silence. God never said, "Seek Me in vain!" Isn't that wonderful? We can ransack the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation and we will never find a lonely verse where God said it would be vain to seek Him. I wonder how many other things that God has never said are designed to encourage my heart.

And make the crooked places[a] straight;
I will break in pieces the gates of bronze
And cut the bars of iron.
3 I will give you the treasures of darkness
And hidden riches of secret places,
That you may know that I, the LORD,
Who call *you* by your name,
Am the God of Israel.
4 For Jacob My servant's sake,
And Israel My elect,
I have even called you by your name;
I have named you, though you have not known Me.
5 I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;
There is no God besides Me.
I will gird you, though you have not known Me,
6 That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting
That *there is* none besides Me.
I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;
7 I form the light and create darkness,
I make peace and create calamity;
I, the LORD, do all these *things*.'

8 "Rain down, you heavens, from above,
And let the skies pour down righteousness;
Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation,
And let righteousness spring up together.
I, the LORD, have created it.

9 "Woe to him who strives with his Maker!
Let the potsherd *strive* with the potsherds of the earth!
Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?'
Or shall your handiwork *say,* 'He has no hands'?
10 Woe to him who says to *his* father, 'What are you begetting?'
Or to the woman, 'What have you brought forth?'"

11 Thus says the LORD,
The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
"Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons;
And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me.
12 I have made the earth,
And created man on it.
I—My hands—stretched out the heavens,
And all their host I have commanded.
13 I have raised him up in righteousness,
And I will direct all his ways;
He shall build My city
And let My exiles go free,
Not for price nor reward,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

The LORD, the Only Savior

14 Thus says the LORD:

"The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush
And of the Sabeans, men of stature,
Shall come over to you, and they shall be yours;
They shall walk behind you,
They shall come over in chains;
And they shall bow down to you.
They will make supplication to you, *saying,* 'Surely God *is* in you,
And *there is* no other;
There is no other God.'"

15 Truly You *are* God, who hide Yourself,
O God of Israel, the Savior!
16 They shall be ashamed
And also disgraced, all of them;
They shall go in confusion together,
Who are makers of idols.
17 *But* Israel shall be saved by the LORD
With an everlasting salvation;
You shall not be ashamed or disgraced
Forever and ever.

18 For thus says the LORD,
Who created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it in vain,
Who formed it to be inhabited:
"I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.
19 I have not spoken in secret,
In a dark place of the earth;
I did not say to the seed of Jacob,
'Seek Me in vain';
I, the LORD, speak righteousness,
I declare things that are right.

45:2 [a]Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *mountains;* Targum reads *I will trample down the walls;* Vulgate reads *I will humble the great ones of the earth.*

20 "Assemble yourselves and come;
Draw near together,
You *who have* escaped from the nations.
They have no knowledge,
Who carry the wood of their carved image,
And pray to a god *that* cannot save.
21 Tell and bring forth *your case;*
Yes, let them take counsel together.
Who has declared this from ancient time?
Who has told it from that time?
Have not I, the LORD?
And *there is* no other God besides Me,
A just God and a Savior;
There is none besides Me.

22 "Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.
23 I have sworn by Myself;
The word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness,
And shall not return,
That to Me every knee shall bow,
Every tongue shall take an oath.
24 He shall say,
'Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength.
To Him *men* shall come,
And all shall be ashamed
Who are incensed against Him.
25 In the LORD all the descendants of Israel
Shall be justified, and shall glory.'"

Dead Idols and the Living God

46 Bel bows down, Nebo stoops;
Their idols were on the beasts and on the cattle.
Your carriages *were* heavily loaded,
A burden to the weary *beast.*
2 They stoop, they bow down together;
They could not deliver the burden,
But have themselves gone into captivity.

3 "Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,
And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
Who have been upheld *by Me* from birth,
Who have been carried from the womb:
4 Even to *your* old age, I *am* He,
And *even* to gray hairs I will carry *you!*
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you.*

5 "To whom will you liken Me, and make *Me* equal
And compare Me, that we should be alike?
6 They lavish gold out of the bag,
And weigh silver on the scales;
They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god;
They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.
7 They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it
And set it in its place, and it stands;
From its place it shall not move.
Though *one* cries out to it, yet it cannot answer
Nor save him out of his trouble.

8 "Remember this, and show yourselves men;
Recall to mind, O you transgressors.
9 Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
I am God, and *there is* none like Me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'
11 Calling a bird of prey from the east,
The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.
Indeed I have spoken *it;*
I will also bring it to pass.
I have purposed *it;*
I will also do it.

12 "Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted,
Who *are* far from righteousness:
13 I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off;
My salvation shall not linger.
And I will place salvation in Zion,
For Israel My glory.

The Humiliation of Babylon

47 "Come down and sit in the dust,
O virgin daughter of Babylon;
Sit on the ground without a throne,
O daughter of the Chaldeans!

For you shall no more be called
Tender and delicate.
2 Take the millstones and grind meal.
Remove your veil,
Take off the skirt,
Uncover the thigh,
Pass through the rivers.
3 Your nakedness shall be uncovered,
Yes, your shame will be seen;
I will take vengeance,
And I will not arbitrate with a man."

4 *As for* our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts
is His name,
The Holy One of Israel.

5 "Sit in silence, and go into darkness,
O daughter of the Chaldeans;
For you shall no longer be called
The Lady of Kingdoms.
6 I was angry with My people;
I have profaned My inheritance,
And given them into your hand.
You showed them no mercy;
On the elderly you laid your yoke very
heavily.
7 And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever,'
So that you did not take these *things*
to heart,
Nor remember the latter end of them.

8 "Therefore hear this now, *you who are*
given to pleasures,
Who dwell securely,
Who say in your heart, 'I *am,* and *there*
is no one else besides me;
I shall not sit *as* a widow,
Nor shall I know the loss of children';
9 But these two *things* shall come to you
In a moment, in one day:
The loss of children, and widowhood.
They shall come upon you in their
fullness
Because of the multitude of your
sorceries,
For the great abundance of your
enchantments.

10 "For you have trusted in your
wickedness;
You have said, 'No one sees me';
Your wisdom and your knowledge have
warped you;
And you have said in your heart,
'I *am,* and *there is* no one else besides me.'
11 Therefore evil shall come upon you;
You shall not know from where it arises.
And trouble shall fall upon you;
You will not be able to put it off.
And desolation shall come upon you
suddenly,
Which you shall not know.

12 "Stand now with your enchantments
And the multitude of your sorceries,
In which you have labored from your
youth—
Perhaps you will be able to profit,
Perhaps you will prevail.
13 You are wearied in the multitude of
your counsels;
Let now the astrologers, the stargazers,
And the monthly prognosticators
Stand up and save you
From what shall come upon you.
14 Behold, they shall be as stubble,
The fire shall burn them;
They shall not deliver themselves
From the power of the flame;
It shall not *be* a coal to be warmed by,
Nor a fire to sit before!
15 Thus shall they be to you
With whom you have labored,
Your merchants from your youth;
They shall wander each one to his
quarter.
No one shall save you.

Israel Refined for God's Glory

48 "Hear this, O house of Jacob,
Who are called by the name of
Israel,
And have come forth from the
wellsprings of Judah;
Who swear by the name of the LORD,
And make mention of the God of Israel,
But not in truth or in righteousness;
2 For they call themselves after the
holy city,
And lean on the God of Israel;
The LORD of hosts *is* His name:

3 "I have declared the former things from
the beginning;
They went forth from My mouth, and I
caused them to hear it.

Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth!
And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the LORD *has comforted His people,*
and will have mercy on His afflicted.
ISAIAH 49:13

And not only that, but we also rejoice
in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have now received
the reconciliation.
ROMANS 5:11

Not having palm branches, as did the triumphant entry celebrants, or lightning in clouds as do the heavens, not having glacier-carved, snow-covered peaks that soar above the clouds or snowy caps or lush valleys of stream-watered greens, not having virgin timbers or rolling prairies of native grasses or subtle deserts or fish-filled lakes, then with my song I will praise Him. Like a wife shakes the fragrant sun-dried sheets and they float down over the bed to cover the place for her husband to rest, so God has spread His sweet covering of salvation over my place of rest, and I lie down with peace, for He has made for me a place of reconciliation between my God and me. How thankful I am that He would not rest until He had reconciled all that was between us and all we have left is the joy in each other's presence. I'll sing to that!



Suddenly I did *them,* and they came
to pass.
4 Because I knew that you *were*
obstinate,
And your neck *was* an iron sinew,
And your brow bronze,
5 Even from the beginning I have
declared *it* to you;
Before it came to pass I proclaimed *it*
to you,
Lest you should say, 'My idol has done
them,
And my carved image and my molded
image
Have commanded them.'

6 "You have heard;
See all this.
And will you not declare *it?*
I have made you hear new things from
this time,
Even hidden things, and you did not
know them.
7 They are created now and not from the
beginning;
And before this day you have not
heard them,
Lest you should say, 'Of course I knew
them.'
8 Surely you did not hear,
Surely you did not know;
Surely from long ago your ear was not
opened.
For I knew that you would deal very
treacherously,
And were called a transgressor from
the womb.

9 "For My name's sake I will defer My
anger,
And *for* My praise I will restrain it from
you,
So that I do not cut you off.
10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as
silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of
affliction.
11 For My own sake, for My own sake, I
will do *it;*
For how should *My name* be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to
another.

Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this, utter it to the end of the earth; say, "The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob!"

ISAIAH 48:20

God's Ancient Plan to Redeem Israel

12 "Listen to Me, O Jacob,
And Israel, My called:
I *am* He, I *am* the First,
I *am* also the Last.
13 Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth,
And My right hand has stretched out the heavens;
When I call to them,
They stand up together.

14 "All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear!
Who among them has declared these *things?*
The LORD loves him;
He shall do His pleasure on Babylon,
And His arm *shall be against* the Chaldeans.
15 I, *even* I, have spoken;
Yes, I have called him,
I have brought him, and his way will prosper.

16 "Come near to Me, hear this:
I have not spoken in secret from the beginning;
From the time that it was, I *was* there.
And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit
Have[a] sent Me."

17 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
"I *am* the LORD your God,
Who teaches you to profit,
Who leads you by the way you should go.
18 Oh, that you had heeded My commandments!
Then your peace would have been like a river,
And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.
19 Your descendants also would have been like the sand,
And the offspring of your body like the grains of sand;
His name would not have been cut off
Nor destroyed from before Me."

20 Go forth from Babylon!
Flee from the Chaldeans!
With a voice of singing,
Declare, proclaim this,
Utter it to the end of the earth;
Say, "The LORD has redeemed
His servant Jacob!"
21 And they did not thirst
When He led them through the deserts;
He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them;
He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out.

22 "*There is* no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked."

The Servant, the Light to the Gentiles

49 "Listen, O coastlands, to Me,
And take heed, you peoples from afar!
The LORD has called Me from the womb;
From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.
2 And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword;
In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me,
And made Me a polished shaft;
In His quiver He has hidden Me."

3 "And He said to me,
'You *are* My servant, O Israel,
In whom I will be glorified.'
4 Then I said, 'I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain;
Yet surely my just reward *is* with the LORD,
And my work with my God.'"

5 "And now the LORD says,
Who formed Me from the womb *to be* His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him,

48:16 [a]The Hebrew verb is singular.

Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you.
ISAIAH 49:15

When we celebrate our nation on the Fourth of July, we do not think so much of the power to overthrow weaker nations or to conquer and plunder the resources of others. We should think more about the responsibilities of the strong to protect the weak, to nurture and strengthen those nations who attack us—*after* we have won the battles.

The Jesus who modeled for us the power of God, the nature of God, was a Jesus who held children, who fed the hungry, took care of the sick. This sounds like the strength of a mother, and there is nothing in nature to be feared more than a mother with her young. So this mothering of God is not a sign of weakness. It is an all-powerful God who is *free* to take care of those He loves without hesitation. He would give His own life before He would let us be hurt. And He did.



So that Israel is gathered to Him[a]
(For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD,
And My God shall be My strength),
6 Indeed He says,
'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

7 Thus says the LORD,
The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One,
To Him whom man despises,
To Him whom the nation abhors,
To the Servant of rulers:
"Kings shall see and arise,
Princes also shall worship,
Because of the LORD who is faithful,
The Holy One of Israel;
And He has chosen You."

8 Thus says the LORD:

"In an acceptable time I have heard You,
And in the day of salvation I have helped You;
I will preserve You and give You
As a covenant to the people,
To restore the earth,
To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;
9 That You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,'
To those who *are* in darkness, 'Show yourselves.'

"They shall feed along the roads,
And their pastures *shall be* on all desolate heights.
10 They shall neither hunger nor thirst,
Neither heat nor sun shall strike them;
For He who has mercy on them will lead them,
Even by the springs of water He will guide them.
11 I will make each of My mountains a road,
And My highways shall be elevated.

49:5 [a]Qere, Dead Sea Scrolls, and Septuagint read *is gathered to Him;* Kethib reads *is not gathered.*

12 Surely these shall come from afar;
Look! Those from the north and
the west,
And these from the land of Sinim."

13 Sing, O heavens!
Be joyful, O earth!
And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
And will have mercy on His afflicted.

Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted.
ISAIAH 49:13

God Will Remember Zion

14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
And my Lord has forgotten me."
15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on the son
of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
Yet I will not forget you.
16 See, I have inscribed you on the palms
of My hands;
Your walls *are* continually before Me.
17 Your sons[a] shall make haste;
Your destroyers and those who laid
you waste
Shall go away from you.
18 Lift up your eyes, look around and see;
All these gather together *and* come to
you.
As I live," says the LORD,
"You shall surely clothe yourselves with
them all as an ornament,
And bind them *on you* as a bride *does.*

19 "For your waste and desolate places,
And the land of your destruction,
Will even now be too small for the
inhabitants;
And those who swallowed you up will
be far away.
20 The children you will have,
After you have lost the others,
Will say again in your ears,
'The place *is* too small for me;
Give me a place where I may dwell.'
21 Then you will say in your heart,
'Who has begotten these for me,
Since I have lost my children and am
desolate,
A captive, and wandering to and fro?
And who has brought these up?
There I was, left alone;
But these, where *were* they?'"

22 Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath
to the nations,
And set up My standard for the
peoples;
They shall bring your sons in *their*
arms,
And your daughters shall be carried on
their shoulders;
23 Kings shall be your foster fathers,
And their queens your nursing
mothers;
They shall bow down to you with *their*
faces to the earth,
And lick up the dust of your feet.
Then you will know that I *am* the LORD,
For they shall not be ashamed who
wait for Me."

24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty,
Or the captives of the righteous[a] be
delivered?

25 But thus says the LORD:

"Even the captives of the mighty shall
be taken away,
And the prey of the terrible be
delivered;
For I will contend with him who
contends with you,
And I will save your children.
26 I will feed those who oppress you with
their own flesh,
And they shall be drunk with their own
blood as with sweet wine.
All flesh shall know
That I, the LORD, *am* your Savior,
And your Redeemer, the Mighty One
of Jacob."

49:17 [a]Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *builders.* **49:24** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Syriac, and Vulgate read *the mighty;* Septuagint reads *unjustly.*

I am the LORD . . . they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.
ISAIAH 49:23

Shame is a heartrending thing. Often it is not based on anything the person has done, but on other people's choices, things that can't be helped or controlled. But God says not to be ashamed, but to wait on the Lord.

In our culture, waiting itself is shameful. We live in a *do* culture. Waiting is not something we put a premium on. Politically savvy people adjust, go with the flow, negotiate anything, adapt. God is unchangeable; His promises immutable; His Word is steadfast.

When we are shaken by things we do or other people do, we have a hope that is *not* shaken. When things are shifting under our feet, the Lord is a Rock. Our hoping is carried by Jesus Himself into the very presence of the unchanging God.



The Servant, Israel's Hope

50 Thus says the LORD:

"Where *is* the certificate of your
mother's divorce,
Whom I have put away?
Or which of My creditors *is it* to whom
I have sold you?
For your iniquities you have sold
yourselves,
And for your transgressions your
mother has been put away.
2 Why, when I came, *was there* no man?
Why, when I called, *was there* none to
answer?
Is My hand shortened at all that it
cannot redeem?
Or have I no power to deliver?
Indeed with My rebuke I dry up the sea,
I make the rivers a wilderness;
Their fish stink because *there is*
no water,
And die of thirst.
3 I clothe the heavens with blackness,
And I make sackcloth their covering."

4 "The Lord GOD has given Me
The tongue of the learned,
That I should know how to speak
A word in season to *him who is* weary.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear
To hear as the learned.
5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear;
And I was not rebellious,
Nor did I turn away.
6 I gave My back to those who struck *Me,*
And My cheeks to those who plucked
out the beard;
I did not hide My face from shame and
spitting.

7 "For the Lord GOD will help Me;
Therefore I will not be disgraced;
Therefore I have set My face like a flint,
And I know that I will not be ashamed.
8 *He is* near who justifies Me;
Who will contend with Me?
Let us stand together.
Who *is* My adversary?
Let him come near Me.
9 Surely the Lord GOD will help Me;
Who *is* he *who* will condemn Me?

Indeed they will all grow old like a
garment;
The moth will eat them up.

10 "Who among you fears the LORD?
Who obeys the voice of His Servant?
Who walks in darkness
And has no light?
Let him trust in the name of the LORD
And rely upon his God.
11 Look, all you who kindle a fire,
Who encircle *yourselves* with sparks:
Walk in the light of your fire and in the
sparks you have kindled—
This you shall have from My hand:
You shall lie down in torment.

The LORD Comforts Zion

51 "Listen to Me, you who follow after
righteousness,
You who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock *from which* you were
hewn,
And to the hole of the pit *from which*
you were dug.
2 Look to Abraham your father,
And to Sarah *who* bore you;
For I called him alone,
And blessed him and increased him."

3 For the LORD will comfort Zion,
He will comfort all her waste places;
He will make her wilderness like Eden,
And her desert like the garden of the
LORD;
Joy and gladness will be found in it,
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

4 "Listen to Me, My people;
And give ear to Me, O My nation:
For law will proceed from Me,
And I will make My justice rest
As a light of the peoples.
5 My righteousness *is* near,
My salvation has gone forth,
And My arms will judge the peoples;
The coastlands will wait upon Me,
And on My arm they will trust.
6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
And look on the earth beneath.
For the heavens will vanish away like
smoke,
The earth will grow old like a garment,

So the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
ISAIAH 51:11

And those who dwell in it will die in
like manner;
But My salvation will be forever,
And My righteousness will not be
abolished.

7 "Listen to Me, you who know
righteousness,
You people in whose heart *is* My law:
Do not fear the reproach of men,
Nor be afraid of their insults.
8 For the moth will eat them up like a
garment,
And the worm will eat them like wool;
But My righteousness will be forever,
And My salvation from generation to
generation."

9 Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of the LORD!
Awake as in the ancient days,
In the generations of old.
Are You not *the arm* that cut Rahab
apart,
And wounded the serpent?

10 *Are* You not *the One* who dried up the sea,
The waters of the great deep;
That made the depths of the sea a road
For the redeemed to cross over?
11 So the ransomed of the LORD shall
return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness;
Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

12 "I, *even* I, *am* He who comforts you.
Who *are* you that you should be afraid
Of a man *who* will die,
And of the son of a man *who* will be
made like grass?
13 And you forget the LORD your Maker,
Who stretched out the heavens

He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief . . . But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

ISAIAH 53:3, 5, 6

Hymn writer Philip Bliss loved three things in his thirty-six-year life: his Savior, his wife, Lucy, and his music. Born around Rome, Pennsylvania, in a log cabin, Bliss was raised on a farm by a family that fostered his love of music and singing. He worked in lumber camps and sawmills as a young man, all the while attending school whenever he could. Bliss became a music teacher and began taking voice lessons. Before he was twenty years old, he began to compose music, selling his first composition in exchange for a flute. He became a teacher in Rome, where he met a young poet named Lucy Young, who became his wife. Having been raised in a musical family, Lucy served as a great encourager of her husband's singing and songwriting, and she would often join him in duets at church. During the next years, Bliss taught music and worked on a farm until Lucy's grandmother supplied Philip with thirty dollars to attend the Normal Academy of Music of New York.

Bliss became a widely recognized talent, and he and Lucy moved to Chicago, where he developed a close friendship with Ira Sankey and D.L. Moody, who encouraged him to become a singing evangelist. Working with Sankey and D.W. Whittle, Bliss published several hymns, including "Dare to Be a Daniel," "Jesus Loves Even Me," "I Will Sing of My Redeemer," and "Hallelujah, What a Savior," which was the last song Sankey heard Bliss sing. Later, Sankey wrote, "It was at a meeting in Farwell Hall in Chicago, conducted by Henry Moorehouse. A few weeks before his death Mr. Bliss visited the State prison at Jackson, Michigan, where, after a very touching address on 'The Man of Sorrows,' he sang this hymn with great effect. Many of the prisoners dated their conversion from that day."

A month later, the Blisses were riding a train when the bridge gave way beneath them, and the train plummeted into the icy waters below. Though Philip escaped the wreckage, he returned to save Lucy, and both died. Can you just imagine their greeting in heaven, singing to the Lord, "Hallelujah, what a savior!"? As Ira Sankey went on to write, "It is said that the word 'Hallelujah' is the same in all languages. It seems as though God had prepared it for the great jubilee of heaven, when all His children shall have been gathered home to sing 'Hallelujah to the Lamb!'"

Hallelujah, What a Savior

Philip Bliss | 1875

1. Man of Sorrows! what a name
For the Son of God, who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

2. Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

3. Guilty, vile, and helpless we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
"Full atonement!" can it be?
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

4. Lifted up was He to die;
"It is finished!" was His cry;
Now in Heav'n exalted high.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

5. When He comes, our glorious King,
All His ransomed home to bring,
Then anew His song we'll sing:
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

And laid the foundations of the earth;
You have feared continually every day
Because of the fury of the oppressor,
When *he has* prepared to destroy.
And where *is* the fury of the oppressor?
14 The captive exile hastens, that he may be loosed,
That he should not die in the pit,
And that his bread should not fail.
15 But I *am* the LORD your God,
Who divided the sea whose waves roared—
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.
16 And I have put My words in your mouth;
I have covered you with the shadow of My hand,
That I may plant the heavens,
Lay the foundations of the earth,
And say to Zion, 'You *are* My people.'"

God's Fury Removed

17 Awake, awake!
Stand up, O Jerusalem,
You who have drunk at the hand of the LORD
The cup of His fury;



MARK LOWRY • Homecoming Artist, the *Gaither Vocal Band*

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. | ISAIAH 53:5

For years I've heard this verse used to prove God guarantees our physical healing through His stripes. I could be wrong, but I don't think so.

Healing of the body is temporary. Even Lazarus had to die again. Everyone who has ever been healed either has died or will. Healing of the body comes to an end. Isaiah must have meant healing for the soul—the healing that will never end.

I've personally known wonderful heroes of faith in wheelchairs, cancer wards, and deathbeds. They've prayed to be healed and were not. Sadly, well-meaning church folks have placed burdens of shame on shoulders already stooped with disease or paralysis by telling these people they weren't healed because they didn't have enough faith.

Is God's gift of healing really dependent on how *much* faith I have? How much is enough?

Jesus said if I had the faith of a mustard seed I could move a mountain (Matt. 17:20). That doesn't sound like a lot of faith.

And what little faith I have is a gift from God, so did God not give me enough?

I read in Matthew 12:15, where Jesus healed every one of the lame brought to Him. And I read in John 5:1–14, where He healed one and left others still lying by the pool of Bethesda, waiting for the waters to stir.

I'm trying to use the gift of faith I've been given to believe God—that He is with me through it all.

Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye when the LORD brings back Zion.
ISAIAH 52:8

You have drunk the dregs of the cup
of trembling,
And drained *it* out.
18 *There is* no one to guide her
Among all the sons she has brought
forth;
Nor *is there any* who takes her by the
hand
Among all the sons she has brought up.
19 These two *things* have come to you;
Who will be sorry for you?—
Desolation and destruction, famine
and sword—
By whom will I comfort you?
20 Your sons have fainted,
They lie at the head of all the streets,
Like an antelope in a net;
They are full of the fury of the LORD,
The rebuke of your God.

21 Therefore please hear this, you afflicted,
And drunk but not with wine.
22 Thus says your Lord,
The LORD and your God,
Who pleads the cause of His people:
"See, I have taken out of your hand
The cup of trembling,
The dregs of the cup of My fury;
You shall no longer drink it.
23 But I will put it into the hand of those
who afflict you,
Who have said to you,[a]
'Lie down, that we may walk over you.'
And you have laid your body like
the ground,
And as the street, for those who
walk over."

God Redeems Jerusalem

52 Awake, awake!
Put on your strength, O Zion;
Put on your beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city!
For the uncircumcised and the unclean
Shall no longer come to you.
2 Shake yourself from the dust, arise;
Sit down, O Jerusalem!
Loose yourself from the bonds of
your neck,
O captive daughter of Zion!

3 For thus says the LORD:

"You have sold yourselves for nothing,
And you shall be redeemed without
money."

4 For thus says the Lord GOD:

"My people went down at first
Into Egypt to dwell there;
Then the Assyrian oppressed them
without cause.
5 Now therefore, what have I here," says
the LORD,
"That My people are taken away for
nothing?
Those who rule over them
Make them wail,"[a] says the LORD,
"And My name *is* blasphemed
continually every day.
6 Therefore My people shall know My
name;
Therefore *they shall know* in that day
That I *am* He who speaks:
'Behold, *it is* I.'"

Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.
ISAIAH 52:9

7 How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good
news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good *things,*
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion,
"Your God reigns!"
8 Your watchmen shall lift up *their* voices,
With their voices they shall sing together;
For they shall see eye to eye
When the LORD brings back Zion.
9 Break forth into joy, sing together,

51:23 [a]Literally *your soul* **52:5** [a]Dead Sea Scrolls read *Mock;* Septuagint reads *Marvel and wail;* Targum reads *Boast themselves;* Vulgate reads *Treat them unjustly.*

You waste places of Jerusalem!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
He has redeemed Jerusalem.
10 The LORD has made bare His holy arm
In the eyes of all the nations;
And all the ends of the earth shall see
The salvation of our God.

11 Depart! Depart! Go out from there,
Touch no unclean *thing;*
Go out from the midst of her,
Be clean,
You who bear the vessels of the LORD.
12 For you shall not go out with haste,
Nor go by flight;
For the LORD will go before you,
And the God of Israel *will be* your rear guard.

The Sin-Bearing Servant

13 Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently;
He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.
14 Just as many were astonished at you,
So His visage was marred more than any man,
And His form more than the sons of men;



REBA RAMBO-McGUIRE • Songwriter, Homecoming Artist, Daughter of Buck and Dottie Rambo, *The Rambos*

"No weapon forged against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and the righteousness is from Me," says the LORD. | ISAIAH 54:17

My prayer closet carpet was soaked and stained with mascara tears. We were having unusual financial challenges in our ministry, and the pressure was overwhelming. I had prayed until my knees ached, yet it seemed the heavens were brass and God was obviously vacationing in Maui. I finally sighed myself up off the floor, languishing into our bedroom.

The TV was on, and a minister I didn't particularly like was speaking. Even though I couldn't stand to watch him, I would occasionally check him out for a few minutes just to see how off he was. Suddenly, he stopped what he was saying and blurted out, "Father, I thank You for the privilege of praying every day that no weapon forged against me shall prosper!"

I froze in my tracks.

"Reba, that's the problem," the Voice whispered. "You have become a weapon forged against this man. He is praying Isaiah 54:17 every day, so I can't prosper you!"

The truth hit me right in the center of my soul.

"But, Father, I haven't spoken against him on a stage or television or written about him in a magazine. I haven't talked about him to anybody!" I cried. "Well, except I did mention how I felt about him to Dony once or twice, and come to think of it, I might have told Suzan Speer or maybe Judy . . ."

Don't you hate it when you get busted? Of course, a lot of us women's idea of keeping a secret is to tell one person at a time!

15 So shall He sprinkle[a] many nations.
Kings shall shut their mouths at Him;
For what had not been told them they shall see,
And what they had not heard they shall consider.

53 Who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.
He has no form or comeliness;
And when we see Him,
There is no beauty that we should desire Him.
3 He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4 Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,

52:15 [a]Or *startle*

I was standing there blubbering when Dony walked in, so I shared what I felt God was speaking to my heart. "Maybe you should call him and repent," Dony smiled.

"But I don't have a clue how to reach him," I pouted.

That moment, his ministry phone number scrolled across the bottom of the screen. I called and miraculously got him on the phone and began my pathetic attempt at apologizing.

Do you want to hear the worst part? He was so forgiving and nice!

"I was just listening to Dony and you sing this morning before the broadcast," he said. "You two just seem to get me fired up to minister! As a matter of fact, would you consider coming and sharing a platform with me?"

Isn't God hysterical?

Yes, we went and sang at one of his services. I quickly realized that he was, as my mama used to say, an acquired taste. He was so kind and gracious to us, and I began to realize that he would reach people I could never effectively touch. He spoke a spiritual language that communicated to a particular people; we are one nation, but many tribes.

Dony and I repented over any and everyone against whom our words had become weapons. We made some phone calls and wrote letters when it was appropriate. Basically, we plucked the weeds out of our garden so the good seed of words we had planted could blossom. We learned the power of agreement could work not only for us but against us. When we agreed in repentant prayer on negative words against others in the body of Christ, they returned multiplied to us.

Would you like to guess who Father used to bless us and heal our wounded finances?

Yep, it was that TV minister.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, . . . so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."*

ISAIAH 55:8–11

When God sends His Word—His commandments, His promises, His blessings, His warnings—it is always to prosper us. But God's definition and our definition of "prosper" couldn't be farther apart. We define "prosper" in earth terms; He defines it in eternal terms. Sometimes, just the fallout of what He's after in us brings with it the tangible, good things of earth because often integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness, and the like are valuable in many "earth enterprises." But be assured, those things are *never* the end result God is after. His Word will always prosper in the thing for which He sent it.

Even our propensity to disobedience is a gift of sorts—so that we would never be able to take credit for our so-called virtue, but come to Him for mercy, grace, joy, forgiveness, and, most important of all, the true love that is the deepest longing of the human—and the divine—heart.

Smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.
8 He was taken from prison and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation?
For He was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.
9 And they[a] made His grave with the wicked—
But with the rich at His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
He has put *Him* to grief.
When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.
11 He shall see the labor of His soul,[a] *and* be satisfied.
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death,

53:9 [a]Literally *he* or *He* **53:11** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *From the labor of His soul He shall see light.*

And He was numbered with the
transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the
transgressors.

"Sing, O barren, you who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman," says the LORD.

ISAIAH 54:1

A Perpetual Covenant of Peace

54 "Sing, O barren,
You *who* have not borne!
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
You *who* have not labored with child!
For more *are* the children of the desolate
Than the children of the married
woman," says the LORD.
2 "Enlarge the place of your tent,
And let them stretch out the curtains
of your dwellings;
Do not spare;
Lengthen your cords,
And strengthen your stakes.
3 For you shall expand to the right and
to the left,
And your descendants will inherit the
nations,
And make the desolate cities inhabited.

4 "Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;
Neither be disgraced, for you will not
be put to shame;
For you will forget the shame of your
youth,
And will not remember the reproach
of your widowhood anymore.
5 For your Maker *is* your husband,
The LORD of hosts *is* His name;
And your Redeemer *is* the Holy One
of Israel;
He is called the God of the whole earth.
6 For the LORD has called you
Like a woman forsaken and grieved
in spirit,
Like a youthful wife when you were
refused,"
Says your God.
7 "For a mere moment I have forsaken you,
But with great mercies I will gather you.
8 With a little wrath I hid My face from
you for a moment;
But with everlasting kindness I will
have mercy on you,"
Says the LORD, your Redeemer.

9 "For this *is* like the waters of Noah to Me;
For as I have sworn
That the waters of Noah would no
longer cover the earth,
So have I sworn
That I would not be angry with you,
nor rebuke you.
10 For the mountains shall depart
And the hills be removed,
But My kindness shall not depart
from you,
Nor shall My covenant of peace be
removed,"
Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

11 "O you afflicted one,
Tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted,
Behold, I will lay your stones with
colorful gems,
And lay your foundations with
sapphires.
12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies,
Your gates of crystal,
And all your walls of precious stones.
13 All your children *shall be* taught by
the LORD,
And great *shall be* the peace of your
children.
14 In righteousness you shall be
established;
You shall be far from oppression, for
you shall not fear;
And from terror, for it shall not come
near you.
15 Indeed they shall surely assemble, *but*
not because of Me.
Whoever assembles against you shall
fall for your sake.

16 "Behold, I have created the blacksmith
Who blows the coals in the fire,
Who brings forth an instrument for
his work;
And I have created the spoiler to destroy.

17 No weapon formed against you shall
prosper,
And every tongue *which* rises against
you in judgment
You shall condemn.
This *is* the heritage of the servants of
the LORD,
And their righteousness *is* from Me,"
Says the LORD.

An Invitation to Abundant Life

55 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.
2 Why do you spend money for *what is*
not bread,
And your wages for *what* does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is*
good,
And let your soul delight itself in
abundance.
3 Incline your ear, and come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live;
And I will make an everlasting
covenant with you—
The sure mercies of David.
4 Indeed I have given him *as* a witness to
the people,
A leader and commander for the people.



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

For the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." | ISAIAH 55:10, 11

What an awesome truth! What a powerful promise! God's Word is sure. He explains to us in a metaphor that we all can understand. As the ground is watered and brings forth food that provides nourishment for our bodies; God's words, when taken to heart, make us alive unto God. His Word provides nourishment for our souls and accomplishes the things of God in us. Christ left with us the Holy Spirit, the Great Teacher (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit prepares the heart. My experience is that when the Living Word comes, He brings the written Word alive within us and His Word becomes part of us.

In my book *The Peace that Passeth Understanding*, I share how God directed me to read Psalm 103. While reading, "Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases" (Ps. 103:3), the Holy Spirit brought these scriptures alive within my heart. I knew that God had touched me through His Word. I was aware of the overpowering presence of the Holy Spirit. I was instantly rid of the pain that I had been experiencing for almost two years, and all my mental anguish was gone.

You may think that your situation is hopeless. Remember that nothing is impossible with God. God has a Word for you and His Word is sure. Why not give God a chance to work in your life? Take God at His Word and believe Him.

5 Surely you shall call a nation you do not know,
And nations *who* do not know you shall run to you,
Because of the LORD your God,
And the Holy One of Israel;
For He has glorified you."

6 Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
7 Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.

8 "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,
Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD.
9 "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.

12 "For you shall go out with joy,
And be led out with peace;
The mountains and the hills
Shall break forth into singing before you,
And all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.
13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree,
And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree;
And it shall be to the LORD for a name,
For an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off."

For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
ISAIAH 55:12

Salvation for the Gentiles

56 Thus says the LORD:
"Keep justice, and do righteousness,
For My salvation *is* about to come,
And My righteousness to be revealed.
2 Blessed *is* the man *who* does this,
And the son of man *who* lays hold on it;
Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And keeps his hand from doing any evil."

3 Do not let the son of the foreigner
Who has joined himself to the LORD
Speak, saying,
"The LORD has utterly separated me from His people";
Nor let the eunuch say,
"Here I am, a dry tree."
4 For thus says the LORD:
"To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,
5 Even to them I will give in My house
And within My walls a place and a name
Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them[a] an everlasting name
That shall not be cut off.

6 "Also the sons of the foreigner
Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him,
And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—
Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And holds fast My covenant—
7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,
And make them joyful in My house of prayer.

56:5 [a]Literally *him*

Is this not the fast that I have chosen:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the heavy burdens, to let the
oppressed go free, and that you
break every yoke?
ISAIAH 58:6

Americans love to celebrate freedom. We set aside a special day and enjoy it with picnics and fireworks and outings, but these celebrations would have no meaning if we do not stop to consider that the gift of freedom has, throughout our history, been purchased with the blood of men and women—with the wound to the soul of many a parent who lived with the loss of their child long after their soldier stopped breathing on some muddy or sun-parched battlefield. Even today as we play the ballgames, fish the ponds, roast the hot dogs, or set off the explosions of color into the night sky, someone is dying and some family will get the word that their child will not be coming home.

That is why we must know why we fight, why our boys and girls are sent, and why they die. The cause must be real and the objective true. No son must die for political maneuvers or to help the economy. It must be for freedom. Freedom dearly bought is always to be treasured and pursued over a false peace where no one is free. Living in fear must be held at bay by the burning fires of right living and right choosing. We must never prostitute our women or barter our boys to *escape* conflict and in avoiding conflict

Their burnt offerings and their
sacrifices
Will be accepted on My altar;
For My house shall be called a house
of prayer for all nations."
8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the
outcasts of Israel, says,
"Yet I will gather to him
Others besides those who are gathered
to him."

Israel's Irresponsible Leaders

9 All you beasts of the field, come to
devour,
All you beasts in the forest.
10 His watchmen *are* blind,
They are all ignorant;
They *are* all dumb dogs,
They cannot bark;
Sleeping, lying down, loving to
slumber.
11 Yes, *they are* greedy dogs
Which never have enough.
And they *are* shepherds
Who cannot understand;
They all look to their own way,
Every one for his own gain,
From his *own* territory.
12 "Come," *one says,* "I will bring wine,
And we will fill ourselves with
intoxicating drink;
Tomorrow will be as today,
And much more abundant."

Israel's Futile Idolatry

57 The righteous perishes,
And no man takes *it* to heart;
Merciful men *are* taken away,
While no one considers
That the righteous is taken away
from evil.
2 He shall enter into peace;
They shall rest in their beds,
Each one walking *in* his uprightness.

3 "But come here,
You sons of the sorceress,
You offspring of the adulterer and the
harlot!
4 Whom do you ridicule?
Against whom do you make a wide
mouth
And stick out the tongue?

Are you not children of transgression,
Offspring of falsehood,
5 Inflaming yourselves with gods under
every green tree,
Slaying the children in the valleys,
Under the clefts of the rocks?
6 Among the smooth *stones* of the stream
Is your portion;
They, they, *are* your lot!
Even to them you have poured a drink
offering,
You have offered a grain offering.
Should I receive comfort in these?

7 "On a lofty and high mountain
You have set your bed;
Even there you went up
To offer sacrifice.
8 Also behind the doors and their posts
You have set up your remembrance;
For you have uncovered yourself *to*
those other than Me,
And have gone up to them;
You have enlarged your bed
And made *a covenant* with them;
You have loved their bed,
Where you saw *their* nudity.[a]
9 You went to the king with ointment,
And increased your perfumes;
You sent your messengers far off,
And *even* descended to Sheol.
10 You are wearied in the length of
your way;
Yet you did not say, 'There is no hope.'
You have found the life of your hand;
Therefore you were not grieved.

11 "And of whom have you been afraid, or
feared,
That you have lied
And not remembered Me,
Nor taken *it* to your heart?
Is it not because I have held My peace
from of old
That you do not fear Me?
12 I will declare your righteousness
And your works,
For they will not profit you.
13 When you cry out,
Let your collection *of idols* deliver you.
But the wind will carry them all away,
A breath will take *them*.

57:8 [a]Literally *hand*, a euphemism

live with the impending knock on the door of our fragile dwelling places that would demand a higher and higher payment for ransom. The greedy landlords of this world will never have enough and simply go away. It is foolhardy for us to think they ever would. There are fates worse than death, and there must always be virtues and freedoms worth fighting for.

So we have paid this ultimate sacrifice throughout our history to eradicate injustice, to defend the weak, to eliminate the ruthless dictators, and to establish a spiritual and physical place where children can be taught and nurtured in those virtues that endure while their parents go about the daily tasks of justice, mercy, industry, and self-discipline for the cause of right and freedom for all.

We must today love and encourage and forgive each other as we play and sing and feast. We must celebrate something true, not just celebrate. And that true thing, our freedom, will always be dear because freedom is not and has never been free. Like the turning of a house into a home, the hollowing out of a country is a daily and active process that grows more precious with every virtue won and every inclination to evil and selfishness defeated. The nicks in the furniture, the dents in the siding, the cracks in the sidewalk, the trees that have grown to shelter and cool are all testimonies to the process that makes a home—or a country—a thing of beauty and value.



But he who puts his trust in Me shall
possess the land,
And shall inherit My holy mountain."

Healing for the Backslider

14 And one shall say,
"Heap it up! Heap it up!
Prepare the way,
Take the stumbling block out of the
way of My people."

15 For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name *is*
Holy:
"I dwell in the high and holy *place*,
With him *who* has a contrite and
humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite
ones.
16 For I will not contend forever,
Nor will I always be angry;
For the spirit would fail before Me,
And the souls *which* I have made.
17 For the iniquity of his covetousness
I was angry and struck him;
I hid and was angry,
And he went on backsliding in the way
of his heart.
18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him;
I will also lead him,
And restore comforts to him
And to his mourners.

19 "I create the fruit of the lips:
Peace, peace to *him who is* far off and to
him who is near,"
Says the LORD,
"And I will heal him."
20 But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea,
When it cannot rest,
Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21 "*There is* no peace,"
Says my God, "for the wicked."

Fasting that Pleases God

58 "Cry aloud, spare not;
Lift up your voice like a trumpet;
Tell My people their transgression,
And the house of Jacob their sins.
2 Yet they seek Me daily,
And delight to know My ways,
As a nation that did righteousness,
And did not forsake the ordinance of
their God.
They ask of Me the ordinances of justice;
They take delight in approaching God.
3 'Why have we fasted,' *they say,* 'and You
have not seen?
Why have we afflicted our souls, and
You take no notice?'

"In fact, in the day of your fast you find
pleasure,
And exploit all your laborers.
4 Indeed you fast for strife and debate,
And to strike with the fist of
wickedness.
You will not fast as *you do* this day,
To make your voice heard on high.
5 Is it a fast that I have chosen,
A day for a man to afflict his soul?
Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush,
And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?
Would you call this a fast,
And an acceptable day to the LORD?

6 "*Is* this not the fast that I have chosen:
To loose the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the heavy burdens,
To let the oppressed go free,
And that you break every yoke?
7 *Is it* not to share your bread with the
hungry,
And that you bring to your house the
poor who are cast out;
When you see the naked, that you
cover him,
And not hide yourself from your own
flesh?
8 Then your light shall break forth like
the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
And your righteousness shall go before
you;
The glory of the LORD shall be your
rear guard.
9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will
answer;
You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I *am.*'

"If you take away the yoke from your
midst,
The pointing of the finger, and
speaking wickedness,

10 *If* you extend your soul to the hungry
And satisfy the afflicted soul,
Then your light shall dawn in the darkness,
And your darkness shall *be* as the noonday.
11 The LORD will guide you continually,
And satisfy your soul in drought,
And strengthen your bones;
You shall be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.
12 Those from among you
Shall build the old waste places;
You shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach,
The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
And call the Sabbath a delight,
The holy *day* of the LORD honorable,
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,
Nor finding your own pleasure,
Nor speaking *your own* words,
14 Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD;
And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,
And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.
The mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Separated from God

59 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened,
That it cannot save;
Nor His ear heavy,
That it cannot hear.
2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,
So that He will not hear.
3 For your hands are defiled with blood,
And your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken lies,
Your tongue has muttered perversity.

4 No one calls for justice,
Nor does *any* plead for truth.
They trust in empty words and speak lies;
They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.
5 They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web;
He who eats of their eggs dies,
And *from* that which is crushed a viper breaks out.

6 Their webs will not become garments,
Nor will they cover themselves with their works;
Their works *are* works of iniquity,
And the act of violence *is* in their hands.
7 Their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed innocent blood;
Their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity;
Wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.
8 The way of peace they have not known,
And *there is* no justice in their ways;
They have made themselves crooked paths;
Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

Sin Confessed

9 Therefore justice is far from us,
Nor does righteousness overtake us;
We look for light, but there is darkness!
For brightness, *but* we walk in blackness!



10 We grope for the wall like the blind,
And we grope as if *we had* no eyes;
We stumble at noonday as at twilight;
We are as dead *men* in desolate places.
11 We all growl like bears,
And moan sadly like doves;
We look for justice, but *there is* none;
For salvation, *but* it is far from us.
12 For our transgressions are multiplied
before You,
And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions *are* with us,
And *as for* our iniquities, we know them:
13 In transgressing and lying against the
LORD,
And departing from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving and uttering from the
heart words of falsehood.
14 Justice is turned back,
And righteousness stands afar off;
For truth is fallen in the street,
And equity cannot enter.
15 So truth fails,
And he *who* departs from evil makes
himself a prey.

The Redeemer of Zion

Then the LORD saw *it,* and it displeased
Him
That *there was* no justice.
16 He saw that *there was* no man,
And wondered that *there was* no
intercessor;
Therefore His own arm brought
salvation for Him;
And His own righteousness, it
sustained Him.
17 For He put on righteousness as a
breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on the garments of vengeance
for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloak.
18 According to *their* deeds, accordingly
He will repay,
Fury to His adversaries,
Recompense to His enemies;
The coastlands He will fully repay.
19 So shall they fear
The name of the LORD from the west,
And His glory from the rising of the sun;
When the enemy comes in like a flood,
The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a
standard against him.

20 "The Redeemer will come to Zion,
And to those who turn from
transgression in Jacob,"
Says the LORD.

21 "As for Me," says the LORD, "this *is* My
covenant with them: My Spirit who *is* upon
you, and My words which I have put in your
mouth, shall not depart from your mouth,
nor from the mouth of your descendants,
nor from the mouth of your descendants'
descendants," says the LORD, "from this
time and forevermore."

The Gentiles Bless Zion

60 Arise, shine;
For your light has come!
And the glory of the LORD is risen
upon you.
2 For behold, the darkness shall cover
the earth,
And deep darkness the people;
But the LORD will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.
3 The Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your
rising.

4 "Lift up your eyes all around, and see:
They all gather together, they come
to you;
Your sons shall come from afar,
And your daughters shall be nursed at
your side.
5 Then you shall see and become
radiant,
And your heart shall swell with joy;
Because the abundance of the sea
shall be turned to you,
The wealth of the Gentiles shall come
to you.
6 The multitude of camels shall cover
your *land,*
The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
All those from Sheba shall come;
They shall bring gold and incense,
And they shall proclaim the praises of
the LORD.
7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be
gathered together to you,

The rams of Nebaioth shall minister
to you;
They shall ascend with acceptance on
My altar,
And I will glorify the house of My glory.

8 "Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud,
And like doves to their roosts?
9 Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me;
And the ships of Tarshish *will come* first,
To bring your sons from afar,
Their silver and their gold with them,
To the name of the LORD your God,
And to the Holy One of Israel,
Because He has glorified you.

10 "The sons of foreigners shall build up
your walls,
And their kings shall minister to you;
For in My wrath I struck you,
But in My favor I have had mercy on you.
11 Therefore your gates shall be open
continually;
They shall not be shut day or night,
That *men* may bring to you the wealth
of the Gentiles,
And their kings in procession.
12 For the nation and kingdom which will
not serve you shall perish,
And *those* nations shall be utterly
ruined.

13 "The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,
The cypress, the pine, and the box tree
together,
To beautify the place of My sanctuary;
And I will make the place of My feet
glorious.
14 Also the sons of those who afflicted you
Shall come bowing to you,
And all those who despised you shall
fall prostrate at the soles of your feet;
And they shall call you The City of the
LORD,
Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15 "Whereas you have been forsaken and
hated,
So that no one went through *you,*
I will make you an eternal excellence,
A joy of many generations.
16 You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles,
And milk the breast of kings;
You shall know that I, the LORD, *am*
your Savior
And your Redeemer, the Mighty One
of Jacob.

17 "Instead of bronze I will bring gold,
Instead of iron I will bring silver,
Instead of wood, bronze,
And instead of stones, iron.
I will also make your officers peace,
And your magistrates righteousness.
18 Violence shall no longer be heard in
your land,
Neither wasting nor destruction
within your borders;
But you shall call your walls Salvation,
And your gates Praise.

God the Glory of His People

19 "The sun shall no longer be your light
by day,
Nor for brightness shall the moon give
light to you;
But the LORD will be to you an
everlasting light,
And your God your glory.
20 Your sun shall no longer go down,
Nor shall your moon withdraw itself;
For the LORD will be your everlasting
light,
And the days of your mourning shall
be ended.
21 Also your people *shall* all *be* righteous;
They shall inherit the land forever,
The branch of My planting,
The work of My hands,
That I may be glorified.
22 A little one shall become a thousand,
And a small one a strong nation.
I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time."

The Good News of Salvation

61 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is*
upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the
brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to *those*
who are bound;
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of
the LORD,

And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,
3 To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

4 And they shall rebuild the old ruins,
They shall raise up the former desolations,
And they shall repair the ruined cities,
The desolations of many generations.
5 Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
And the sons of the foreigner
Shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.
6 But you shall be named the priests of the LORD,
They shall call you the servants of our God.
You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles,
And in their glory you shall boast.



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its bud, as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the LORD God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. | ISAIAH 61:10, 11

I didn't like it much, but it was cheap. It had been on display in the window, and it *was* a satin wedding dress, and it *did* fit. So I put a little money down and promised to bring along fifty more dollars . . . somehow. My in-laws-to-be were graciously paying for the church wedding, but I did feel obligated to at least buy the gown. In a couple of weeks, a cashier's check made out to me for fifty dollars arrived in the college mail! It would buy the dress! Who had sent it? I knew not, but guessed it might be the friend who was to be our best man.

After the wedding, the dress was boxed and moved with all our other things so many times, I lost track of it. It had served its purpose and didn't seem to be of any special value.

Then one day a few weeks before her wedding, Paula, our oldest daughter, came sailing down the stairs with the wedding dress on, laughing and dancing and saying to her excited sisters and girlfriend, "Oh, I found it! I love it! I'm going to wear it for my wedding!" I was aghast! "Why? That's a terrible wedding dress. I never liked it."

7 Instead of your shame *you shall have*
double *honor,*
And *instead of* confusion they shall
rejoice in their portion.
Therefore in their land they shall
possess double;
Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

8 "For I, the LORD, love justice;
I hate robbery for burnt offering;
I will direct their work in truth,
And will make with them an
everlasting covenant.
9 Their descendants shall be known
among the Gentiles,
And their offspring among the
people.
All who see them shall acknowledge
them,
That they *are* the posterity *whom* the
LORD has blessed."

10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
My soul shall be joyful in my God;
For He has clothed me with the
garments of salvation,
He has covered me with the robe of
righteousness,
As a bridegroom decks *himself* with
ornaments,

"Oh, no it's not!" she said. "It's beautiful and I'm going to wear it!" And she did! It looked beautiful, and she was beautiful! We purchased a lovely lace veil to go with it, one that the saleslady would hardly sell us. "It was out of style," she said, "and no one would want it." It was also cheap. But we loved it and we wanted it. After the wedding the dress got packed away with a great deal more care.

Then before long, Karen was to be married. "I'll wear the dress too, Momma, and I'll wear Paula's veil! I love it. It will be so beautiful!" So a friend made a trip to Chicago and bought some fabulous imported lace that looked like the lace on the veil. She cut out lace flowers and appliquéd them all over the soft, old satin dress. It was suddenly lovely enough to be in a museum. So Karen wore my dress and her sister's veil. She looked so gorgeous when she came down the aisle, I thought my heart would stop!

And there was *that* dress that I didn't like and had bought cheap and hauled around not paying it any mind, considering it worthless. There was *that* dress looking for all the world like a royal robe fit for a queen! What of its value now? Priceless. Absolutely priceless . . . not because of the material, the satin, the lace, or the style. Priceless because of the human values . . . two lovely daughters had loved me enough to want to wear my dress . . . because our own marriage had almost failed but didn't. It came back with great love and beauty because of two more young marriages doing well . . . and because my father-in-law, the girls' grandfather, said the vows for us all—all in the same dress.

Those are the reasons why a piece of satin and lace can be called priceless! By the way, remember the cashier's check that paid for the dress in the first place? I found out twenty-five years after our wedding that it came from my husband. Priceless? Yes. Some things are priceless.

And as a bride adorns *herself* with her
jewels.
11 For as the earth brings forth its bud,
As the garden causes the things that
are sown in it to spring forth,
So the Lord GOD will cause
righteousness and praise to spring
forth before all the nations.

Assurance of Zion's Salvation

62 For Zion's sake I will not hold
My peace,
And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
Until her righteousness goes forth as
brightness,
And her salvation as a lamp *that* burns.
2 The Gentiles shall see your
righteousness,
And all kings your glory.
You shall be called by a new name,
Which the mouth of the LORD
will name.
3 You shall also be a crown of glory
In the hand of the LORD,
And a royal diadem
In the hand of your God.
4 You shall no longer be termed
Forsaken,
Nor shall your land any more be
termed Desolate;



SQUIRE PARSONS • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Formerly with *The Kingsmen Quartet*

You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. | ISAIAH 62:4

When I sing the song that I wrote in 1973, "Sweet Beulah Land," the following is what goes through my mind: Israel was in bondage and captivity. Jerusalem had been pillaged and destroyed. The land that Jehovah had promised them had been taken from them by their captors. The many covenants that Jehovah had made with Israel on the condition of their obedience had been broken on their part by their many failures and transgressions. Those that held them in captivity were taunting them by saying, "Where is your Jehovah God? He has forsaken you; and where is your homeland? Your homes and city have been destroyed. No one is living there now" (see 2 Kin. 18; Is. 37).

Then God sends His messenger, Isaiah. He brings a message of hope and encouragement.

"You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."

There are two words to which we give our attention: *Hephzibah* and *Beulah*. These words are used in reference to two other words, "Forsaken" and "Desolate," which are also proper nouns since they are also capitalized. I believe that the definitions of *Hephzibah* and *Beulah* are given to us in the

But you shall be called Hephzibah,[a]
and your land Beulah;[b]
For the LORD delights in you,
And your land shall be married.
5 For *as* a young man marries
a virgin,
So shall your sons marry you;
And *as* the bridegroom rejoices over
the bride,
So shall your God rejoice over you.

6 I have set watchmen on your walls,
O Jerusalem;
They shall never hold their peace
day or night.
You who make mention of the LORD,
do not keep silent,
7 And give Him no rest till He
establishes
And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in
the earth.

8 The LORD has sworn by His right hand
And by the arm of His strength:
"Surely I will no longer give your grain
As food for your enemies;
And the sons of the foreigner shall not
drink your new wine,
For which you have labored.

62:4 [a]Literally *My Delight Is in Her* [b]Literally *Married*

last phrase of the same verse: "For the LORD delights in you" refers to the first word, *Hephzibah*. "And your land shall be married" refers to the word *Beulah*. This verse is literally referring to the time when Israel would be restored not only in occupation, but also in power and prestige.

There are varied definitions for the word *Beulah*: *Unger's Bible Dictionary* defines it as a prophetic figurative expression describing Palestine/Israel, restored to God's blessing. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as "to marry" or "to have dominion over." Some of our hymns use "Beulah Land" to describe heaven's borderland, obviously a reference to a joyful, spiritual experience which we as Christians experience at times, such as "Dwelling in Beulah Land" and "O Beulah Land." Still yet others use it in reference to heaven: "Is Not This the Land of Beulah?"

In the literal view of this verse, many commentators and preachers refer to Israel as being the earthly bride of Jehovah God; and then a wonderful parallel is drawn as we contemplate the church, or the redeemed, which makes up the New Jerusalem, as being the heavenly bride of God the Son. "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:9, 10).

As we contemplate these parallels we can conclude that when we are redeemed by the precious blood of Calvary's Lamb, then by the wonderful grace of God we can be called Hephzibah. For certainly the Lord delights in us, and our future eternal home is that heavenly "Sweet Beulah Land" where we, the bride of Christ, shall forever be with the heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ in that holy New Jerusalem.

9 But those who have gathered it shall
eat it,
And praise the LORD;
Those who have brought it together
shall drink it in My holy courts."

10 Go through,
Go through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people;
Build up,
Build up the highway!
Take out the stones,
Lift up a banner for the peoples!

11 Indeed the LORD has proclaimed
To the end of the world:
"Say to the daughter of Zion,
'Surely your salvation is coming;
Behold, His reward *is* with Him,
And His work before Him.'"
12 And they shall call them The Holy
People,
The Redeemed of the LORD;
And you shall be called Sought Out,
A City Not Forsaken.

The LORD in Judgment and Salvation

63 Who *is* this who comes from Edom,
With dyed garments from Bozrah,
This *One who is* glorious in His
apparel,
Traveling in the greatness of His
strength?—

"I who speak in righteousness, mighty
to save."

2 Why *is* Your apparel red,
And Your garments like one who treads
in the winepress?

3 "I have trodden the winepress alone,
And from the peoples no one *was*
with Me.
For I have trodden them in My anger,
And trampled them in My fury;
Their blood is sprinkled upon My
garments,
And I have stained all My robes.
4 For the day of vengeance *is* in My heart,
And the year of My redeemed has come.
5 I looked, but *there was* no one to help,
And I wondered
That *there was* no one to uphold;
Therefore My own arm brought
salvation for Me;
And My own fury, it sustained Me.
6 I have trodden down the peoples in
My anger,
Made them drunk in My fury,
And brought down their strength to
the earth."

God's Mercy Remembered

7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of
the LORD
And the praises of the LORD,
According to all that the LORD has
bestowed on us,
And the great goodness toward the
house of Israel,
Which He has bestowed on them
according to His mercies,
According to the multitude of His
lovingkindnesses.
8 For He said, "Surely they *are* My people,
Children *who* will not lie."
So He became their Savior.
9 In all their affliction He was afflicted,
And the Angel of His Presence saved
them;
In His love and in His pity He
redeemed them;
And He bore them and carried them
All the days of old.
10 But they rebelled and grieved His Holy
Spirit;
So He turned Himself against them as
an enemy,
And He fought against them.

11 Then he remembered the days of old,
Moses *and* his people, *saying:*
"Where *is* He who brought them up out
of the sea
With the shepherd of His flock?
Where *is* He who put His Holy Spirit
within them,
12 Who led *them* by the right hand of
Moses,
With His glorious arm,
Dividing the water before them
To make for Himself an everlasting
name,
13 Who led them through the deep,
As a horse in the wilderness,
That they might not stumble?"

14 As a beast goes down into the valley,
And the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest,
So You lead Your people,
To make Yourself a glorious name.

A Prayer of Penitence

15 Look down from heaven,
And see from Your habitation, holy and glorious.
Where *are* Your zeal and Your strength,
The yearning of Your heart and Your mercies toward me?
Are they restrained?
16 Doubtless You *are* our Father,
Though Abraham was ignorant of us,
And Israel does not acknowledge us.
You, O LORD, *are* our Father;
Our Redeemer from Everlasting *is* Your name.
17 O LORD, why have You made us stray from Your ways,
And hardened our heart from Your fear?
Return for Your servants' sake,
The tribes of Your inheritance.
18 Your holy people have possessed *it* but a little while;
Our adversaries have trodden down Your sanctuary.
19 We have become *like* those of old, over whom You never ruled,
Those who were never called by Your name.

64 Oh, that You would rend the heavens!
That You would come down!
That the mountains might shake at Your presence—
2 As fire burns brushwood,
As fire causes water to boil—
To make Your name known to Your adversaries,
That the nations may tremble at Your presence!
3 When You did awesome things *for which* we did not look,
You came down,
The mountains shook at Your presence.
4 For since the beginning of the world
Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear,
Nor has the eye seen any God besides You,
Who acts for the one who waits for Him.
5 You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness,
Who remembers You in Your ways.
You are indeed angry, for we have sinned—
In these ways we continue;
And we need to be saved.

6 But we are all like an unclean *thing,*
And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags;
We all fade as a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind,
Have taken us away.
7 And *there is* no one who calls on Your name,
Who stirs himself up to take hold of You;
For You have hidden Your face from us,
And have consumed us because of our iniquities.

8 But now, O LORD,
You *are* our Father;
We *are* the clay, and You our potter;
And all we *are* the work of Your hand.
9 Do not be furious, O LORD,
Nor remember iniquity forever;
Indeed, please look—we all *are* Your people!
10 Your holy cities are a wilderness,
Zion is a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation.
11 Our holy and beautiful temple,
Where our fathers praised You,
Is burned up with fire;
And all our pleasant things are laid waste.
12 Will You restrain Yourself because of these *things,* O LORD?
Will You hold Your peace, and afflict us very severely?

The Righteousness of God's Judgment

65 "I was sought by *those who* did not ask *for Me;*
I was found by *those who* did not seek Me.
I said, 'Here I am, here I am,'
To a nation *that* was not called by My name.
2 I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people,

Who walk in a way *that is* not good,
According to their own thoughts;
3 A people who provoke Me to anger
continually to My face;
Who sacrifice in gardens,
And burn incense on altars of brick;
4 Who sit among the graves,
And spend the night in the tombs;
Who eat swine's flesh,
And the broth of abominable things is
in their vessels;
5 Who say, 'Keep to yourself,
Do not come near me,
For I am holier than you!'
These *are* smoke in My nostrils,
A fire that burns all the day.

6 "Behold, *it is* written before Me:
I will not keep silence, but will repay—
Even repay into their bosom—
7 Your iniquities and the iniquities of
your fathers together,"
Says the LORD,
"Who have burned incense on the
mountains
And blasphemed Me on the hills;
Therefore I will measure their former
work into their bosom."

8 Thus says the LORD:

"As the new wine is found in the cluster,
And *one* says, 'Do not destroy it,
For a blessing *is* in it,'
So will I do for My servants' sake,
That I may not destroy them all.
9 I will bring forth descendants from
Jacob,
And from Judah an heir of My
mountains;
My elect shall inherit it,
And My servants shall dwell there.
10 Sharon shall be a fold of flocks,
And the Valley of Achor a place for
herds to lie down,
For My people who have sought Me.

11 "But you *are* those who forsake the
LORD,
Who forget My holy mountain,
Who prepare a table for Gad,[a]
And who furnish a drink offering for
Meni.[b]
12 Therefore I will number you for the
sword,
And you shall all bow down to the
slaughter;
Because, when I called, you did not
answer;
When I spoke, you did not hear,
But did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which I do not
delight."

13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, My servants shall eat,
But you shall be hungry;
Behold, My servants shall drink,
But you shall be thirsty;
Behold, My servants shall rejoice,
But you shall be ashamed;
14 Behold, My servants shall sing for joy
of heart,
But you shall cry for sorrow of heart,
And wail for grief of spirit.
15 You shall leave your name as a curse to
My chosen;
For the Lord GOD will slay you,
And call His servants by another name;
16 So that he who blesses himself in the
earth
Shall bless himself in the God of truth;
And he who swears in the earth
Shall swear by the God of truth;
Because the former troubles are
forgotten,
And because they are hidden from
My eyes.

Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but you shall cry for sorrow of heart, and wail for grief of spirit.
ISAIAH 65:14

The Glorious New Creation

17 "For behold, I create new heavens and
a new earth;
And the former shall not be
remembered or come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever in
what I create;

65:11 [a]Literally *Troop* or *Fortune*, a pagan deity [b]Literally *Number* or *Destiny*, a pagan deity

For behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a
rejoicing,
And her people a joy.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
And joy in My people;
The voice of weeping shall no longer
be heard in her,
Nor the voice of crying.

20 "No more shall an infant from there *live*
but a few days,
Nor an old man who has not fulfilled
his days;
For the child shall die one hundred
years old,
But the sinner *being* one hundred years
old shall be accursed.
21 They shall build houses and inhabit
them;
They shall plant vineyards and eat
their fruit.
22 They shall not build and another inhabit;
They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the
days of My people,
And My elect shall long enjoy the work
of their hands.
23 They shall not labor in vain,
Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For they *shall be* the descendants of
the blessed of the LORD,
And their offspring with them.

24 "It shall come to pass
That before they call, I will answer;
And while they are still speaking, I will
hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed
together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And dust *shall be* the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all
My holy mountain,"
Says the LORD.

True Worship and False

66 Thus says the LORD:
"Heaven *is* My throne,
And earth *is* My footstool.
Where *is* the house that you will
build Me?
And where *is* the place of My rest?
2 For all those *things* My hand has made,
And all those *things* exist,"
Says the LORD.
"But on this *one* will I look:
On *him who is* poor and of a contrite
spirit,
And who trembles at My word.

3 "He who kills a bull *is as if* he slays a man;
He who sacrifices a lamb, *as if* he
breaks a dog's neck;
He who offers a grain offering, *as if he*
offers swine's blood;
He who burns incense, *as if* he blesses
an idol.
Just as they have chosen their own ways,
And their soul delights in their
abominations,
4 So will I choose their delusions,
And bring their fears on them;
Because, when I called, no one answered,
When I spoke they did not hear;
But they did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which I do not
delight."

The LORD Vindicates Zion

5 Hear the word of the LORD,
You who tremble at His word:
"Your brethren who hated you,
Who cast you out for My name's sake,
said,
'Let the LORD be glorified,
That we may see your joy.'
But they shall be ashamed."

6 The sound of noise from the city!
A voice from the temple!
The voice of the LORD,
Who fully repays His enemies!

7 "Before she was in labor, she gave birth;
Before her pain came,
She delivered a male child.
8 Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall the earth be made to give birth
in one day?
Or shall a nation be born at once?
For as soon as Zion was in labor,
She gave birth to her children.
9 Shall I bring to the time of birth, and
not cause delivery?" says the LORD.

"Shall I who cause delivery shut up *the womb?*" says your God.
10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem,
And be glad with her, all you who love her;
Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;
11 That you may feed and be satisfied
With the consolation of her bosom,
That you may drink deeply and be delighted
With the abundance of her glory."

12 For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,
And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.
Then you shall feed;
On *her* sides shall you be carried,
And be dandled on *her* knees.
13 As one whom his mother comforts,
So I will comfort you;
And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

The Reign and Indignation of God

14 When you see *this,* your heart shall rejoice,
And your bones shall flourish like grass;
The hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants,
And *His* indignation to His enemies.
15 For behold, the LORD will come with fire
And with His chariots, like a whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For by fire and by His sword
The LORD will judge all flesh;
And the slain of the LORD shall be many.

17 "Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves,
To go to the gardens
After an *idol* in the midst,
Eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse,
Shall be consumed together," says the LORD.

18 "For I *know* their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. 19 I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: *to* Tarshish and Pul[a] and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, *to* the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. 20 Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. 21 And I will also take some of them for priests *and* Levites," says the LORD.

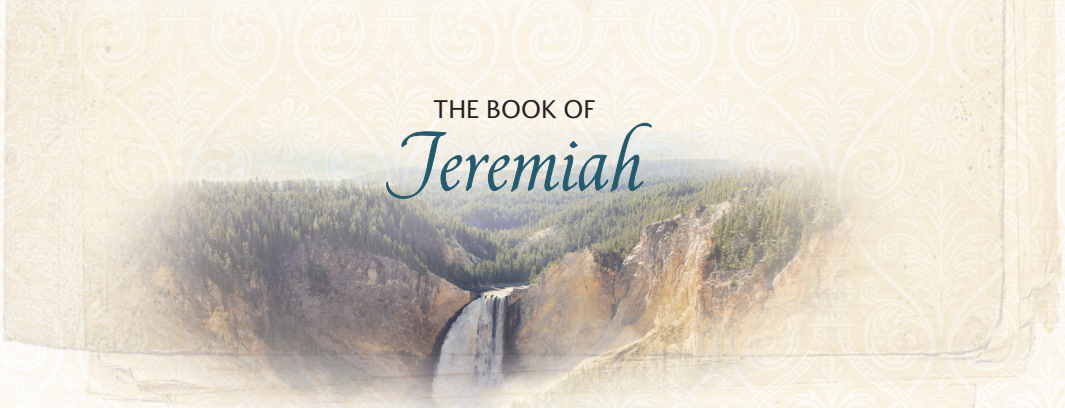
22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth
Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD,
"So shall your descendants and your name remain.
23 And it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD.

24 "And they shall go forth and look
Upon the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their worm does not die,
And their fire is not quenched.
They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

66:19 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint reads *Put* (compare Jeremiah 46:9).

THE BOOK OF

Jeremiah



1 The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah,
of the priests who *were* in Anathoth in
the land of Benjamin, 2to whom the word of
the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son
of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth
year of his reign. 3It came also in the days
of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of
Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of
Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah,
until the carrying away of Jerusalem cap-
tive in the fifth month.

The Prophet Is Called

4Then the word of the LORD came to me,
saying:

5 "Before I formed you in the womb I
knew you;
Before you were born I sanctified you;
I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

6Then said I:

"Ah, Lord GOD!
Behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a youth."

7But the LORD said to me:

"Do not say, 'I *am* a youth,'
For you shall go to all to whom I
send you,
And whatever I command you, you
shall speak.
8 Do not be afraid of their faces,
For I *am* with you to deliver you,"
says the LORD.

9Then the LORD put forth His hand and
touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me:

"Behold, I have put My words in your
mouth.
10 See, I have this day set you over the
nations and over the kingdoms,
To root out and to pull down,
To destroy and to throw down,
To build and to plant."

11Moreover the word of the LORD came
to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?"
And I said, "I see a branch of an almond
tree."
12Then the LORD said to me, "You have
seen well, for I am ready to perform My
word."
13And the word of the LORD came to me
the second time, saying, "What do you see?"
And I said, "I see a boiling pot, and it is
facing away from the north."
14Then the LORD said to me:

"Out of the north calamity shall break
forth
On all the inhabitants of the land.
15 For behold, I am calling
All the families of the kingdoms of the
north," says the LORD;
"They shall come and each one set his
throne
At the entrance of the gates of
Jerusalem,
Against all its walls all around,
And against all the cities of Judah.
16 I will utter My judgments
Against them concerning all their
wickedness,
Because they have forsaken Me,
Burned incense to other gods,
And worshiped the works of their own
hands.

17 "Therefore prepare yourself and arise,
And speak to them all that I command
you.
Do not be dismayed before their
faces,
Lest I dismay you before them.
18 For behold, I have made you this day
A fortified city and an iron pillar,

And bronze walls against the whole land—
Against the kings of Judah,
Against its princes,
Against its priests,
And against the people of the land.
19 They will fight against you,
But they shall not prevail against you.
For I *am* with you," says the LORD, "to deliver you."

God's Case Against Israel

2 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

2 "Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD:

"I remember you,
The kindness of your youth,
The love of your betrothal,
When you went after Me in the wilderness,
In a land not sown.
3 Israel *was* holiness to the LORD,
The firstfruits of His increase.
All that devour him will offend;
Disaster will come upon them," says the LORD.'"

4 Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. 5 Thus says the LORD:

"What injustice have your fathers found in Me,
That they have gone far from Me,
Have followed idols,
And have become idolaters?
6 Neither did they say, 'Where *is* the LORD,
Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt,
Who led us through the wilderness,
Through a land of deserts and pits,
Through a land of drought and the shadow of death,
Through a land that no one crossed
And where no one dwelt?'
7 I brought you into a bountiful country,
To eat its fruit and its goodness.
But when you entered, you defiled My land
And made My heritage an abomination.
8 The priests did not say, 'Where *is* the LORD?'
And those who handle the law did not know Me;
The rulers also transgressed against Me;
The prophets prophesied by Baal,
And walked after *things that* do not profit.

9 "Therefore I will yet bring charges against you," says the LORD,
"And against your children's children I will bring charges.
10 For pass beyond the coasts of Cyprus[a] and see,
Send to Kedar[b] and consider diligently,
And see if there has been such *a thing*.
11 Has a nation changed *its* gods,
Which *are* not gods?
But My people have changed their Glory
For *what* does not profit.
12 Be astonished, O heavens, at this,
And be horribly afraid;
Be very desolate," says the LORD.
13 "For My people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters,
And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.

14 "*Is* Israel a servant?
Is he a homeborn *slave?*
Why is he plundered?
15 The young lions roared at him, *and* growled;
They made his land waste;
His cities are burned, without inhabitant.
16 Also the people of Noph[a] and Tahpanhes
Have broken the crown of your head.
17 Have you not brought this on yourself,
In that you have forsaken the LORD your God
When He led you in the way?
18 And now why take the road to Egypt,
To drink the waters of Sihor?
Or why take the road to Assyria,
To drink the waters of the River?[a]
19 Your own wickedness will correct you,
And your backslidings will rebuke you.

2:10 [a]Hebrew *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus [b]In the northern Arabian desert, representative of the eastern cultures **2:16** [a]That is, Memphis in ancient Egypt **2:18** [a]That is, the Euphrates

Know therefore and see that *it is* an
evil and bitter *thing*
That you have forsaken the LORD your
God,
And the fear of Me *is* not in you,"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts.

20 "For of old I have broken your yoke *and*
burst your bonds;
And you said, 'I will not transgress,'
When on every high hill and under
every green tree
You lay down, playing the harlot.
21 Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a
seed of highest quality.
How then have you turned before Me
Into the degenerate plant of an alien
vine?
22 For though you wash yourself with lye,
and use much soap,
Yet your iniquity is marked before Me,"
says the Lord GOD.

23 "How can you say, 'I am not polluted,
I have not gone after the Baals'?
See your way in the valley;
Know what you have done:
You are a swift dromedary breaking
loose in her ways,
24 A wild donkey used to the wilderness,
That sniffs at the wind in her desire;
In her time of mating, who can turn
her away?
All those who seek her will not weary
themselves;
In her month they will find her.
25 Withhold your foot from being
unshod, and your throat from thirst.
But you said, 'There is no hope.
No! For I have loved aliens, and after
them I will go.'

26 "As the thief is ashamed when he is
found out,
So is the house of Israel ashamed;
They and their kings and their princes,
and their priests and their prophets,
27 Saying to a tree, 'You *are* my father,'
And to a stone, 'You gave birth to me.'
For they have turned *their* back to Me,
and not *their* face.
But in the time of their trouble
They will say, 'Arise and save us.'

28 But where *are* your gods that you have
made for yourselves?
Let them arise,
If they can save you in the time of your
trouble;
For *according to* the number of your cities
Are your gods, O Judah.

29 "Why will you plead with Me?
You all have transgressed against Me,"
says the LORD.
30 "In vain I have chastened your children;
They received no correction.
Your sword has devoured your prophets
Like a destroying lion.

31 "O generation, see the word of the LORD!
Have I been a wilderness to Israel,
Or a land of darkness?
Why do My people say, 'We are lords;
We will come no more to You'?
32 Can a virgin forget her ornaments,
Or a bride her attire?
Yet My people have forgotten Me days
without number.

33 "Why do you beautify your way to
seek love?
Therefore you have also taught
The wicked women your ways.
34 Also on your skirts is found
The blood of the lives of the poor
innocents.
I have not found it by secret search,
But plainly on all these things.
35 Yet you say, 'Because I am innocent,
Surely His anger shall turn from me.'
Behold, I will plead My case against you,
Because you say, 'I have not sinned.'
36 Why do you gad about so much to
change your way?
Also you shall be ashamed of Egypt as
you were ashamed of Assyria.
37 Indeed you will go forth from him
With your hands on your head;
For the LORD has rejected your trusted
allies,
And you will not prosper by them.

Israel Is Shameless

3 "They say, 'If a man divorces his wife,
And she goes from him
And becomes another man's,

May he return to her again?'
Would not that land be greatly
polluted?
But you have played the harlot with
many lovers;
Yet return to Me," says the LORD.

2 "Lift up your eyes to the desolate
heights and see:
Where have you not lain *with men?*
By the road you have sat for them
Like an Arabian in the wilderness;
And you have polluted the land
With your harlotries and your
wickedness.
3 Therefore the showers have been
withheld,
And there has been no latter rain.
You have had a harlot's forehead;
You refuse to be ashamed.
4 Will you not from this time cry to Me,
'My Father, You *are* the guide of my
youth?
5 Will He remain angry forever?
Will He keep it to the end?'
Behold, you have spoken and done
evil things,
As you were able."

A Call to Repentance

6 The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 7 And I said, after she had done all these *things,* 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. 9 So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. 10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the LORD.

11 Then the LORD said to me, "Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. 12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say:

'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the
LORD;
'I will not cause My anger to fall on you.
For I *am* merciful,' says the LORD;
'I will not remain angry forever.
13 Only acknowledge your iniquity,
That you have transgressed against the
LORD your God,
And have scattered your charms
To alien deities under every green tree,
And you have not obeyed My voice,'
says the LORD.

14 "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. 15 And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

16 "Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days," says the LORD, "that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit *it,* nor shall it be made anymore.

17 "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

18 "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.



19 "But I said:

'How can I put you among the children
And give you a pleasant land,
A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?'

"And I said:

'You shall call Me, "My Father,"
And not turn away from Me.'
20 Surely, *as* a wife treacherously departs from her husband,
So have you dealt treacherously with Me,
O house of Israel," says the LORD.

21 A voice was heard on the desolate heights,
Weeping *and* supplications of the children of Israel.
For they have perverted their way;
They have forgotten the LORD their God.

22 "Return, you backsliding children,
And I will heal your backslidings."

"Indeed we do come to You,
For You are the LORD our God.
23 Truly, in vain *is salvation hoped for* from the hills,
And from the multitude of mountains;
Truly, in the LORD our God
Is the salvation of Israel.
24 For shame has devoured
The labor of our fathers from our youth—
Their flocks and their herds,
Their sons and their daughters.
25 We lie down in our shame,
And our reproach covers us.
For we have sinned against the LORD our God,
We and our fathers,
From our youth even to this day,
And have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God."

4 "If you will return, O Israel," says the LORD,
"Return to Me;
And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight,
Then you shall not be moved.
2 And you shall swear, 'The LORD lives,'
In truth, in judgment, and in righteousness;
The nations shall bless themselves in Him,
And in Him they shall glory."

3 For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:

"Break up your fallow ground,
And do not sow among thorns.
4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,
And take away the foreskins of your hearts,
You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,
Lest My fury come forth like fire,
And burn so that no one can quench *it,*
Because of the evil of your doings."

An Imminent Invasion

5 Declare in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say:

"Blow the trumpet in the land;
Cry, 'Gather together,'
And say, 'Assemble yourselves,
And let us go into the fortified cities.'
6 Set up the standard toward Zion.
Take refuge! Do not delay!
For I will bring disaster from the north,
And great destruction."

7 The lion has come up from his thicket,
And the destroyer of nations is on his way.
He has gone forth from his place
To make your land desolate.
Your cities will be laid waste,
Without inhabitant.
8 For this, clothe yourself with sackcloth,
Lament and wail.
For the fierce anger of the LORD
Has not turned back from us.

9 "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the LORD,
"*That* the heart of the king shall perish,
And the heart of the princes;
The priests shall be astonished,
And the prophets shall wonder."

10 Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD!
Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem,

Saying, 'You shall have peace,'
Whereas the sword reaches to the heart."

11 At that time it will be said
To this people and to Jerusalem,
"A dry wind of the desolate heights
blows in the wilderness
Toward the daughter of My people—
Not to fan or to cleanse—
12 A wind too strong for these will come for Me;
Now I will also speak judgment against them."

13 "Behold, he shall come up like clouds,
And his chariots like a whirlwind.
His horses are swifter than eagles.
Woe to us, for we are plundered!"

14 O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness,
That you may be saved.
How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?
15 For a voice declares from Dan
And proclaims affliction from Mount Ephraim:
16 "Make mention to the nations,
Yes, proclaim against Jerusalem,
That watchers come from a far country
And raise their voice against the cities of Judah.
17 Like keepers of a field they are against her all around,
Because she has been rebellious against Me," says the LORD.
18 "Your ways and your doings
Have procured these *things* for you.
This *is* your wickedness,
Because it is bitter,
Because it reaches to your heart."

Sorrow for the Doomed Nation

19 O my soul, my soul!
I am pained in my very heart!
My heart makes a noise in me;
I cannot hold my peace,
Because you have heard, O my soul,
The sound of the trumpet,
The alarm of war.
20 Destruction upon destruction is cried,
For the whole land is plundered.
Suddenly my tents are plundered,
And my curtains in a moment.
21 How long will I see the standard,
And hear the sound of the trumpet?

22 "For My people *are* foolish,
They have not known Me.
They *are* silly children,
And they have no understanding.
They *are* wise to do evil,
But to do good they have no knowledge."

23 I beheld the earth, and indeed *it was* without form, and void;
And the heavens, they *had* no light.
24 I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled,
And all the hills moved back and forth.
25 I beheld, and indeed *there was* no man,
And all the birds of the heavens had fled.
26 I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land *was* a wilderness,
And all its cities were broken down
At the presence of the LORD,
By His fierce anger.

27 For thus says the LORD:

"The whole land shall be desolate;
Yet I will not make a full end.
28 For this shall the earth mourn,
And the heavens above be black,
Because I have spoken.
I have purposed and will not relent,
Nor will I turn back from it.
29 The whole city shall flee from the noise of the horsemen and bowmen.
They shall go into thickets and climb up on the rocks.
Every city *shall be* forsaken,
And not a man shall dwell in it.

30 "And *when* you *are* plundered,
What will you do?
Though you clothe yourself with crimson,
Though you adorn *yourself* with ornaments of gold,
Though you enlarge your eyes with paint,
In vain you will make yourself fair;
Your lovers will despise you;
They will seek your life.

31 "For I have heard a voice as of a woman

in labor,
The anguish as of her who brings forth her first child,
The voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself;
She spreads her hands, *saying,*
'Woe *is* me now, for my soul is weary
Because of murderers!'

The Justice of God's Judgment

5 "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem;
See now and know;
And seek in her open places
If you can find a man,
If there is *anyone* who executes judgment,
Who seeks the truth,
And I will pardon her.
2 Though they say, '*As* the LORD lives,'
Surely they swear falsely."

3 O LORD, *are* not Your eyes on the truth?
You have stricken them,
But they have not grieved;
You have consumed them,
But they have refused to receive correction.
They have made their faces harder than rock;
They have refused to return.

4 Therefore I said, "Surely these *are* poor.
They are foolish;
For they do not know the way of the LORD,
The judgment of their God.
5 I will go to the great men and speak to them,
For they have known the way of the LORD,
The judgment of their God."

But these have altogether broken the yoke
And burst the bonds.
6 Therefore a lion from the forest shall slay them,
A wolf of the deserts shall destroy them;
A leopard will watch over their cities.
Everyone who goes out from there shall be torn in pieces,
Because their transgressions are many;
Their backslidings have increased.

7 "How shall I pardon you for this?
Your children have forsaken Me
And sworn by *those that are* not gods.
When I had fed them to the full,
Then they committed adultery
And assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses.
8 They were *like* well-fed lusty stallions;
Every one neighed after his neighbor's wife.
9 Shall I not punish *them* for these *things?*" says the LORD.
"And shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?

10 "Go up on her walls and destroy,
But do not make a complete end.
Take away her branches,
For they *are* not the LORD's.
11 For the house of Israel and the house of Judah
Have dealt very treacherously with Me," says the LORD.

12 They have lied about the LORD,
And said, "*It is* not He.
Neither will evil come upon us,
Nor shall we see sword or famine.
13 And the prophets become wind,
For the word *is* not in them.
Thus shall it be done to them."

14 Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts:

"Because you speak this word,
Behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire,
And this people wood,
And it shall devour them.
15 Behold, I will bring a nation against you from afar,
O house of Israel," says the LORD.
"It *is* a mighty nation,
It *is* an ancient nation,
A nation whose language you do not know,
Nor can you understand what they say.
16 Their quiver *is* like an open tomb;
They *are* all mighty men.
17 And they shall eat up your harvest and your bread,

Which your sons and daughters
should eat.
They shall eat up your flocks and your
herds;
They shall eat up your vines and your
fig trees;
They shall destroy your fortified cities,
In which you trust, with the sword.

18 "Nevertheless in those days," says the
LORD, "I will not make a complete end of
you. 19 And it will be when you say, 'Why
does the LORD our God do all these *things*
to us?' then you shall answer them, 'Just as
you have forsaken Me and served foreign
gods in your land, so you shall serve aliens
in a land *that is* not yours.'

20 "Declare this in the house of Jacob
And proclaim it in Judah, saying,
21 'Hear this now, O foolish people,
Without understanding,
Who have eyes and see not,
And who have ears and hear not:
22 Do you not fear Me?' says the LORD.
'Will you not tremble at My presence,
Who have placed the sand as the
bound of the sea,
By a perpetual decree, that it cannot
pass beyond it?
And though its waves toss to and fro,
Yet they cannot prevail;
Though they roar, yet they cannot pass
over it.
23 But this people has a defiant and
rebellious heart;
They have revolted and departed.
24 They do not say in their heart,
"Let us now fear the LORD our God,
Who gives rain, both the former and
the latter, in its season.
He reserves for us the appointed weeks
of the harvest."
25 Your iniquities have turned these
things away,
And your sins have withheld good
from you.

26 'For among My people are found
wicked *men;*
They lie in wait as one who sets snares;
They set a trap;
They catch men.
27 As a cage is full of birds,
So their houses *are* full of deceit.
Therefore they have become great
and grown rich.
28 They have grown fat, they are sleek;
Yes, they surpass the deeds of the
wicked;
They do not plead the cause,
The cause of the fatherless;
Yet they prosper,
And the right of the needy they do
not defend.
29 Shall I not punish *them* for these
things?' says the LORD.
'Shall I not avenge Myself on such a
nation as this?'

30 "An astonishing and horrible thing
Has been committed in the land:
31 The prophets prophesy falsely,
And the priests rule by their *own* power;
And My people love *to have it* so.
But what will you do in the end?

Impending Destruction from the North

6 "O you children of Benjamin,
Gather yourselves to flee from the
midst of Jerusalem!
Blow the trumpet in Tekoa,
And set up a signal-fire in Beth
Haccerem;
For disaster appears out of the north,
And great destruction.
2 I have likened the daughter of Zion
To a lovely and delicate woman.
3 The shepherds with their flocks shall
come to her.
They shall pitch *their* tents against her
all around.
Each one shall pasture in his own place."

4 "Prepare war against her;
Arise, and let us go up at noon.
Woe to us, for the day goes away,
For the shadows of the evening are
lengthening.
5 Arise, and let us go by night,
And let us destroy her palaces."

6 For thus has the LORD of hosts said:

"Cut down trees,
And build a mound against Jerusalem.

This *is* the city to be punished.
She *is* full of oppression in her midst.
7 As a fountain wells up with water,
So she wells up with her wickedness.
Violence and plundering are heard in her.
Before Me continually *are* grief and wounds.
8 Be instructed, O Jerusalem,
Lest My soul depart from you;
Lest I make you desolate,
A land not inhabited."

9 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"They shall thoroughly glean as a vine the remnant of Israel;
As a grape-gatherer, put your hand back into the branches."

10 To whom shall I speak and give warning,
That they may hear?
Indeed their ear *is* uncircumcised,
And they cannot give heed.
Behold, the word of the LORD is a reproach to them;
They have no delight in it.
11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD.
I am weary of holding *it* in.
"I will pour it out on the children outside,
And on the assembly of young men together;
For even the husband shall be taken with the wife,
The aged with *him who is* full of days.
12 And their houses shall be turned over to others,
Fields and wives together;
For I will stretch out My hand
Against the inhabitants of the land," says the LORD.
13 "Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them,
Everyone *is* given to covetousness;
And from the prophet even to the priest,
Everyone deals falsely.
14 They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly,
Saying, 'Peace, peace!'
When *there is* no peace.
15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?
No! They were not at all ashamed;
Nor did they know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;
At the time I punish them,
They shall be cast down," says the LORD.

16 Thus says the LORD:

"Stand in the ways and see,
And ask for the old paths, where the good way *is*,
And walk in it;
Then you will find rest for your souls.
But they said, 'We will not walk *in it*.'
17 Also, I set watchmen over you, *saying*,
'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!'
But they said, 'We will not listen.'
18 Therefore hear, you nations,
And know, O congregation, what *is* among them.
19 Hear, O earth!
Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people—
The fruit of their thoughts,
Because they have not heeded My words
Nor My law, but rejected it.
20 For what purpose to Me
Comes frankincense from Sheba,
And sweet cane from a far country?
Your burnt offerings *are* not acceptable,
Nor your sacrifices sweet to Me."

21 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people,
And the fathers and the sons together shall fall on them.
The neighbor and his friend shall perish."

22 Thus says the LORD:

"Behold, a people comes from the north country,
And a great nation will be raised from the farthest parts of the earth.
23 They will lay hold on bow and spear;
They *are* cruel and have no mercy;
Their voice roars like the sea;
And they ride on horses,
As men of war set in array against you, O daughter of Zion."

24 We have heard the report of it;
Our hands grow feeble.
Anguish has taken hold of us,
Pain as of a woman in labor.
25 Do not go out into the field,
Nor walk by the way.
Because of the sword of the enemy,
Fear *is* on every side.
26 O daughter of my people,
Dress in sackcloth
And roll about in ashes!
Make mourning *as for* an only son,
most bitter lamentation;
For the plunderer will suddenly come
upon us.

27 "I have set you *as* an assayer *and* a
fortress among My people,
That you may know and test their way.
28 They *are* all stubborn rebels, walking as
slanderers.
They are bronze and iron,
They *are* all corrupters;
29 The bellows blow fiercely,
The lead is consumed by the fire;
The smelter refines in vain,
For the wicked are not drawn off.
30 *People* will call them rejected silver,
Because the LORD has rejected them."

Trusting in Lying Words

7 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2"Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, all *you of* Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!'" 3Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are* these.'

5"For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, 6*if* you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, 7then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

8"Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. 9Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, 10and *then* come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? 11Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen *it*," says the LORD.

12"But go now to My place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. 13And now, because you have done all these works," says the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, 14therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. 15And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren—the whole posterity of Ephraim.

16"Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you. 17Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and *they* pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. 19Do they provoke Me to anger?" says the LORD. "*Do they* not *provoke* themselves, to the shame of their own faces?"

20Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, My anger and My fury will be poured out on this place—on man and on beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground. And it will burn and not be quenched."

21Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat. 22For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. 23But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded

Home of Your Dreams

GLORIA GAITHER

Somewhere there's a country where
The air is pure and skies are fair and
blue.
It's the home of your dreams . . .
There's no war and there's no strife
The hopes of all your life come
true—It's the home—
It's the home of your dreams.
There is no violence there;
Kids in the city square
Can dance and play and laugh with-
out a single care.
There is music in the hills.
There's comfort and good will and
peace again
Where love begins . . .
And never ends.

It's a place where there's no fear,
Where consciences are always clear
and fair—
It's the home of your dreams.
There's no shame, abuse or pain
No ugly words will there profane the
air—
It's the home of your dreams.
No one is ever sad
Gone is the loss we had—
We'll do the things we always knew
that we could do.
All the dying and the cares
The longings and the prayers will all
be done
And we'll be home,
Finally, home.
It's the Home of your dreams
The home of your dreams.

you, that it may be well with you.' 24Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels *and* the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. 25Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them.* 26Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

27"Therefore you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not obey you. You shall also call to them, but they will not answer you.

Judgment on Obscene Religion

28"So you shall say to them, 'This *is* a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth. 29Cut off your hair and cast *it* away, and take up a lamentation on the desolate heights; for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.' 30For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight," says the LORD. "They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it. 31And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart.

32"Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room. 33The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten *them away.* 34Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. For the land shall be desolate.

8 "At that time," says the LORD, "they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves. 2They shall spread them before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and which they have served and after which they have walked, which they have sought and which they have worshiped. They shall not be gathered nor buried; they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. 3Then death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of those who remain of this evil family, who remain in all the places where I have driven them," says the LORD of hosts.

The Peril of False Teaching

4"Moreover you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD:

"Will they fall and not rise?
Will one turn away and not return?
5 Why has this people slidden back,
Jerusalem, in a perpetual backsliding?
They hold fast to deceit,
They refuse to return.
6 I listened and heard,
But they do not speak aright.
No man repented of his wickedness,
Saying, 'What have I done?'
Everyone turned to his own course,
As the horse rushes into the battle.

7 "Even the stork in the heavens
Knows her appointed times;
And the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow
Observe the time of their coming.
But My people do not know the judgment of the LORD.

8 "How can you say, 'We *are* wise,
And the law of the LORD *is* with us'?
Look, the false pen of the scribe certainly works falsehood.
9 The wise men are ashamed,
They are dismayed and taken.
Behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD;
So what wisdom do they have?
10 Therefore I will give their wives to others,
And their fields to those who will inherit *them;*
Because from the least even to the greatest

Everyone is given to covetousness;
From the prophet even to the priest
Everyone deals falsely.
11 For they have healed the hurt of the
daughter of My people slightly,
Saying, 'Peace, peace!'
When *there is* no peace.
12 Were they ashamed when they had
committed abomination?
No! They were not at all ashamed,
Nor did they know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among those
who fall;
In the time of their punishment
They shall be cast down," says the LORD.

13 "I will surely consume them," says the
LORD.
"No grapes *shall be* on the vine,
Nor figs on the fig tree,
And the leaf shall fade;
And *the things* I have given them shall
pass away from them." '"

14 "Why do we sit still?
Assemble yourselves,
And let us enter the fortified cities,
And let us be silent there.
For the LORD our God has put us to
silence
And given us water of gall to drink,
Because we have sinned against
the LORD.

15 "*We* looked for peace, but no good *came;*
And for a time of health, and there was
trouble!
16 The snorting of His horses was heard
from Dan.
The whole land trembled at the sound
of the neighing of His strong ones;
For they have come and devoured the
land and all that is in it,
The city and those who dwell in it."

17 "For behold, I will send serpents
among you,
Vipers which cannot be charmed,
And they shall bite you," says the LORD.

The Prophet Mourns for the People

18 I would comfort myself in sorrow;
My heart *is* faint in me.

19 Listen! The voice,
The cry of the daughter of my people
From a far country:
"*Is* not the LORD in Zion?
Is not her King in her?"

"Why have they provoked Me to anger
With their carved images—
With foreign idols?"

20 "The harvest is past,
The summer is ended,
And we are not saved!"

21 For the hurt of the daughter of my
people I am hurt.
I am mourning;
Astonishment has taken hold of me.
22 *Is there* no balm in Gilead,
Is there no physician there?
Why then is there no recovery
For the health of the daughter of my
people?

You know when you're young you think you will always be. As you become more fragile, you reflect and you realize how much comfort can come from the past. Hymns can carry you into the future.

ANDY GRIFFITH

9 Oh, that my head were waters,
And my eyes a fountain of tears,
That I might weep day and night
For the slain of the daughter of my
people!
2 Oh, that I had in the wilderness
A lodging place for travelers;
That I might leave my people,
And go from them!
For they *are* all adulterers,
An assembly of treacherous men.

3 "And *like* their bow they have bent their
tongues *for* lies.
They are not valiant for the truth on
the earth.
For they proceed from evil to evil,
And they do not know Me," says
the LORD.

4 "Everyone take heed to his neighbor,
And do not trust any brother;
For every brother will utterly supplant,
And every neighbor will walk with slanderers.
5 Everyone will deceive his neighbor,
And will not speak the truth;
They have taught their tongue to speak lies;
They weary themselves to commit iniquity.
6 Your dwelling place *is* in the midst of deceit;
Through deceit they refuse to know Me," says the LORD.

7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Behold, I will refine them and try them;
For how shall I deal with the daughter of My people?
8 Their tongue *is* an arrow shot out;
It speaks deceit;
One speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth,
But in his heart he lies in wait.
9 Shall I not punish them for these *things?*" says the LORD.
"Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?"

10 I will take up a weeping and wailing for the mountains,
And for the dwelling places of the wilderness a lamentation,
Because they are burned up,
So that no one can pass through;
Nor can *men* hear the voice of the cattle.
Both the birds of the heavens and the beasts have fled;
They are gone.

11 "I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a den of jackals.
I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant."

12 Who *is* the wise man who may understand this? And *who is he* to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken, that he may declare it? Why does the land perish *and* burn up like a wilderness, so that no one can pass through?
13 And the LORD said, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it, 14 but they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them," 15 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. 16 I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them."

The People Mourn in Judgment

17 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Consider and call for the mourning women,
That they may come;
And send for skillful *wailing* women,
That they may come.
18 Let them make haste
And take up a wailing for us,
That our eyes may run with tears,
And our eyelids gush with water.
19 For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion:
'How we are plundered!
We are greatly ashamed,
Because we have forsaken the land,
Because we have been cast out of our dwellings.'"

20 Yet hear the word of the LORD, O women,
And let your ear receive the word of His mouth;
Teach your daughters wailing,
And everyone her neighbor a lamentation.
21 For death has come through our windows,
Has entered our palaces,
To kill off the children— *no longer to be* outside!
And the young men— *no longer* on the streets!

22 Speak, "Thus says the LORD:

'Even the carcasses of men shall fall as refuse on the open field,
Like cuttings after the harvester,
And no one shall gather *them.*'"

23 Thus says the LORD:

"Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might,
Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches;
24 But let him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I *am* the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.
For in these I delight," says the LORD.

25 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will punish all *who are* circumcised with the uncircumcised— 26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all *who are* in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness. For all *these* nations *are* uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel *are* uncircumcised in the heart."

Idols and the True God

10 Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.
2 Thus says the LORD:

"Do not learn the way of the Gentiles;
Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven,
For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.
3 For the customs of the peoples *are* futile;
For *one* cuts a tree from the forest,
The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax.
4 They decorate it with silver and gold;
They fasten it with nails and hammers
So that it will not topple.
5 They *are* upright, like a palm tree,
And they cannot speak;
They must be carried,
Because they cannot go *by themselves*.
Do not be afraid of them,
For they cannot do evil,
Nor can they do any good."

6 Inasmuch as *there is* none like You, O LORD
(You *are* great, and Your name *is* great in might),
7 Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?
For this is Your rightful due.
For among all the wise *men* of the nations,
And in all their kingdoms,
There is none like You.
8 But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish;
A wooden idol *is* a worthless doctrine.
9 Silver is beaten into plates;
It is brought from Tarshish,
And gold from Uphaz,
The work of the craftsman
And of the hands of the metalsmith;
Blue and purple *are* their clothing;
They *are* all the work of skillful *men*.
10 But the LORD *is* the true God;
He *is* the living God and the everlasting King.
At His wrath the earth will tremble,
And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.

11 Thus you shall say to them: "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens."

12 He has made the earth by His power,
He has established the world by His wisdom,
And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.
13 When He utters His voice,
There is a multitude of waters in the heavens:
"And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightning for the rain,
He brings the wind out of His treasuries."[a]

14 Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge;
Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image;
For his molded image *is* falsehood,
And *there is* no breath in them.
15 They *are* futile, a work of errors;
In the time of their punishment they shall perish.
16 The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them,
For He *is* the Maker of all *things*,

10:13 [a]Psalm 135:7

And Israel *is* the tribe of His
inheritance;
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.

The Coming Captivity of Judah

17 Gather up your wares from the land,
O inhabitant of the fortress!

18 For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will throw out at this time
The inhabitants of the land,
And will distress them,
That they may find *it so*."

19 Woe is me for my hurt!
My wound is severe.
But I say, "Truly this *is* an infirmity,
And I must bear it."
20 My tent is plundered,
And all my cords are broken;
My children have gone from me,
And they *are* no more.
There is no one to pitch my tent
anymore,
Or set up my curtains.

21 For the shepherds have become
dull-hearted,
And have not sought the LORD;
Therefore they shall not prosper,
And all their flocks shall be
scattered.
22 Behold, the noise of the report has
come,
And a great commotion out of the
north country,
To make the cities of Judah desolate,
a den of jackals.

23 O LORD, I know the way of man *is* not in
himself;
It is not in man who walks to direct his
own steps.
24 O LORD, correct me, but with justice;
Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to
nothing.
25 Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles,
who do not know You,
And on the families who do not call on
Your name;
For they have eaten up Jacob,
Devoured him and consumed him,
And made his dwelling place desolate.

The Broken Covenant

11 The word that came to Jeremiah from
the LORD, saying, 2 "Hear the words of
this covenant, and speak to the men of
Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
3 and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD God
of Israel: "Cursed *is* the man who does not
obey the words of this covenant 4 which
I commanded your fathers in the day I
brought them out of the land of Egypt,
from the iron furnace, saying, 'Obey My
voice, and do according to all that I com-
mand you; so shall you be My people, and I
will be your God,' 5 that I may establish the
oath which I have sworn to your fathers,
to give them 'a land flowing with milk and
honey,'[a] as *it is* this day." '"

And I answered and said, "So be it, LORD."

6 Then the LORD said to me, "Proclaim all
these words in the cities of Judah and in
the streets of Jerusalem, saying: 'Hear the
words of this covenant and do them. 7 For I
earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I
brought them up out of the land of Egypt,
until this day, rising early and exhorting,
saying, "Obey My voice." 8 Yet they did not
obey or incline their ear, but everyone
followed the dictates of his evil heart; there-
fore I will bring upon them all the words of
this covenant, which I commanded *them* to
do, but *which* they have not done.'"

9 And the LORD said to me, "A conspiracy
has been found among the men of Judah
and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
10 They have turned back to the iniquities
of their forefathers who refused to hear My
words, and they have gone after other gods
to serve them; the house of Israel and the
house of Judah have broken My covenant
which I made with their fathers."

11 Therefore thus says the LORD: "Behold,
I will surely bring calamity on them which
they will not be able to escape; and though
they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.
12 Then the cities of Judah and the inhabit-
ants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the
gods to whom they offer incense, but they
will not save them at all in the time of their
trouble. 13 For *according to* the number of your
cities were your gods, O Judah; and *accord-
ing to* the number of the streets of Jerusalem

11:5 [a]Exodus 3:8

you have set up altars to *that* shameful thing,
altars to burn incense to Baal.
14 "So do not pray for this people, or lift
up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not
hear *them* in the time that they cry out to
Me because of their trouble.

15 "What has My beloved to do in My house,
Having done lewd deeds with many?
And the holy flesh has passed from you.
When you do evil, then you rejoice.
16 The LORD called your name,
Green Olive Tree, Lovely *and* of Good
Fruit.
With the noise of a great tumult
He has kindled fire on it,
And its branches are broken.

17 "For the LORD of hosts, who planted
you, has pronounced doom against you
for the evil of the house of Israel and of
the house of Judah, which they have done
against themselves to provoke Me to anger
in offering incense to Baal."

Jeremiah's Life Threatened

18 Now the LORD gave me knowledge
of it, and I know *it;* for You showed me
their doings. 19 But I *was* like a docile
lamb brought to the slaughter; and I did
not know that they had devised schemes
against me, *saying,* "Let us destroy the tree
with its fruit, and let us cut him off from
the land of the living, that his name may
be remembered no more."

20 But, O LORD of hosts,
You who judge righteously,
Testing the mind and the heart,
Let me see Your vengeance on them,
For to You I have revealed my cause.

21 "Therefore thus says the LORD concern-
ing the men of Anathoth who seek your life,
saying, 'Do not prophesy in the name of the
LORD, lest you die by our hand'— 22 there-
fore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I
will punish them. The young men shall die
by the sword, their sons and their daugh-
ters shall die by famine; 23 and there shall
be no remnant of them, for I will bring
catastrophe on the men of Anathoth, *even*
the year of their punishment.'"

Jeremiah's Question

12 Righteous *are* You, O LORD, when
I plead with You;
Yet let me talk with You about *Your*
judgments.
Why does the way of the wicked
prosper?
Why are those happy who deal so
treacherously?
2 You have planted them, yes, they have
taken root;
They grow, yes, they bear fruit.
You *are* near in their mouth
But far from their mind.

3 But You, O LORD, know me;
You have seen me,
And You have tested my heart
toward You.
Pull them out like sheep for the
slaughter,
And prepare them for the day of
slaughter.
4 How long will the land mourn,
And the herbs of every field wither?
The beasts and birds are consumed,
For the wickedness of those who dwell
there,
Because they said, "He will not see our
final end."

The LORD Answers Jeremiah

5 "If you have run with the footmen, and
they have wearied you,
Then how can you contend with horses?
And *if* in the land of peace,
In which you trusted, *they wearied you,*
Then how will you do in the
floodplain[a] of the Jordan?
6 For even your brothers, the house of
your father,
Even they have dealt treacherously
with you;
Yes, they have called a multitude
after you.
Do not believe them,
Even though they speak smooth words
to you.

7 "I have forsaken My house, I have left
My heritage;

12:5 [a]Or *thicket*

I have given the dearly beloved of My
soul into the hand of her enemies.
8 My heritage is to Me like a lion in the
forest;
It cries out against Me;
Therefore I have hated it.
9 My heritage *is* to Me *like* a speckled
vulture;
The vultures all around *are* against her.
Come, assemble all the beasts of the
field,
Bring them to devour!

10 "Many rulers[a] have destroyed My
vineyard,
They have trodden My portion
underfoot;
They have made My pleasant portion a
desolate wilderness.
11 They have made it desolate;
Desolate, it mourns to Me;
The whole land is made desolate,
Because no one takes *it* to heart.
12 The plunderers have come
On all the desolate heights in the
wilderness,
For the sword of the LORD shall devour
From *one* end of the land to the *other*
end of the land;
No flesh shall have peace.
13 They have sown wheat but reaped
thorns;
They have put themselves to pain *but*
do not profit.
But be ashamed of your harvest
Because of the fierce anger of the LORD."

14Thus says the LORD: "Against all My evil neighbors who touch the inheritance which I have caused My people Israel to inherit—behold, I will pluck them out of their land and pluck out the house of Judah from among them. 15Then it shall be, after I have plucked them out, that I will return and have compassion on them and bring them back, everyone to his heritage and everyone to his land. 16And it shall be, if they will learn carefully the ways of My people, to swear by My name, 'As the LORD lives,' as they taught My people to swear by Baal, then they shall be established in the midst of My people. 17But if they do not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation," says the LORD.

Symbol of the Linen Sash

13 Thus the LORD said to me: "Go and get yourself a linen sash, and put it around your waist, but do not put it in water." 2So I got a sash according to the word of the LORD, and put *it* around my waist.

3And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, 4"Take the sash that you acquired, which *is* around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates,[a] and hide it there in a hole in the rock." 5So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

6Now it came to pass after many days that the LORD said to me, "Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the sash which I commanded you to hide there." 7Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the sash from the place where I had hidden it; and there was the sash, ruined. It was profitable for nothing.

8Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9"Thus says the LORD: 'In this manner I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. 10This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who follow the dictates of their hearts, and walk after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be just like this sash which is profitable for nothing. 11For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,' says the LORD, 'that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.'

Symbol of the Wine Bottles

12"Therefore you shall speak to them this word: 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Every bottle shall be filled with wine." '

"And they will say to you, 'Do we not certainly know that every bottle will be filled with wine?'

13"Then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land—even the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness! 14And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together," says the

12:10 [a]Literally *shepherds* or *pastors* **13:4** [a]Hebrew *Perath*

LORD. "I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy, but will destroy them." '"

Pride Precedes Captivity

15 Hear and give ear:
Do not be proud,
For the LORD has spoken.
16 Give glory to the LORD your God
Before He causes darkness,
And before your feet stumble
On the dark mountains,
And while you are looking for light,
He turns it into the shadow of death
And makes *it* dense darkness.
17 But if you will not hear it,
My soul will weep in secret for *your* pride;
My eyes will weep bitterly
And run down with tears,
Because the LORD's flock has been taken captive.

18 Say to the king and to the queen mother,
"Humble yourselves;
Sit down,
For your rule shall collapse, the crown of your glory."
19 The cities of the South shall be shut up,
And no one shall open *them;*
Judah shall be carried away captive, all of it;
It shall be wholly carried away captive.

20 Lift up your eyes and see
Those who come from the north.
Where *is* the flock *that* was given to you,
Your beautiful sheep?
21 What will you say when He punishes you?
For you have taught them
To be chieftains, to be head over you.
Will not pangs seize you,
Like a woman in labor?
22 And if you say in your heart,
"Why have these things come upon me?"
For the greatness of your iniquity
Your skirts have been uncovered,
Your heels made bare.
23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?
Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.
24 "Therefore I will scatter them like stubble
That passes away by the wind of the wilderness.
25 This is your lot,
The portion of your measures from Me," says the LORD,
"Because you have forgotten Me
And trusted in falsehood.
26 Therefore I will uncover your skirts over your face,
That your shame may appear.
27 I have seen your adulteries
And your *lustful* neighings,
The lewdness of your harlotry,
Your abominations on the hills in the fields.
Woe to you, O Jerusalem!
Will you still not be made clean?"

Sword, Famine, and Pestilence

14 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts.

2 "Judah mourns,
And her gates languish;
They mourn for the land,
And the cry of Jerusalem has gone up.
3 Their nobles have sent their lads for water;
They went to the cisterns *and* found no water.
They returned with their vessels empty;
They were ashamed and confounded
And covered their heads.
4 Because the ground is parched,
For there was no rain in the land,
The plowmen were ashamed;
They covered their heads.
5 Yes, the deer also gave birth in the field,
But left because there was no grass.
6 And the wild donkeys stood in the desolate heights;
They sniffed at the wind like jackals;
Their eyes failed because *there was* no grass."

7 O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us,
Do it for Your name's sake;
For our backslidings are many,
We have sinned against You.
8 O the Hope of Israel, his Savior in time of trouble,

Why should You be like a stranger in
the land,
And like a traveler *who* turns aside to
tarry for a night?
9 Why should You be like a man
astonished,
Like a mighty one *who* cannot save?
Yet You, O LORD, *are* in our midst,
And we are called by Your name;
Do not leave us!

10 Thus says the LORD to this people:

"Thus they have loved to wander;
They have not restrained their feet.
Therefore the LORD does not accept
them;
He will remember their iniquity now,
And punish their sins."

11 Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for this people, for *their* good. 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence."

13 Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'"

14 And the LORD said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. 15 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not be in this land'—'By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed! 16 And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; they will have no one to bury them—them nor their



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And it shall be, if they say to you, "Where should we go?" then you shall tell them, "Thus says the LORD: 'Such as are for death, to death; And such as are for the sword, to the sword; And such as are for the famine, to the famine; And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.'" | JEREMIAH 15:2

Could there possibly be a greater passage on the sovereignty of God than this? Picture the chaos of a war, for that is the context of this passage. Imagine people running in every direction to escape the enemy. In Jeremiah's age, they would have been on horses and their weapons would have been war-swords. I can picture a frightened farmer hiding behind a tree in fear of being cut to pieces by the enemy sword, but God had destined that farmer to die of famine. It would have been impossible to die by the sword if you were destined to die by famine. Another is destined to die by disease; another to be captured and enslaved in captivity. In the chaos of war, God has determined who would die by disease, sword, famine, and those who would become prisoners of war. Such sovereignty, while it should cause the unbeliever to tremble, is a wonderful resting place for His own.

wives, their sons nor their daughters—for
I will pour their wickedness on them.'
17 "Therefore you shall say this word to
them:

'Let my eyes flow with tears night and day,
And let them not cease;
For the virgin daughter of my people
Has been broken with a mighty stroke,
with a very severe blow.
18 If I go out to the field,
Then behold, those slain with the sword!
And if I enter the city,
Then behold, those sick from famine!
Yes, both prophet and priest go about
in a land they do not know.'"

The People Plead for Mercy

19 Have You utterly rejected Judah?
Has Your soul loathed Zion?
Why have You stricken us so that *there*
is no healing for us?
We looked for peace, but *there was* no
good;
And for the time of healing, and there
was trouble.
20 We acknowledge, O LORD, our
wickedness
And the iniquity of our fathers,
For we have sinned against You.
21 Do not abhor *us,* for Your name's sake;
Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory.
Remember, do not break Your
covenant with us.
22 Are there any among the idols of the
nations that can cause rain?
Or can the heavens give showers?
Are You not He, O LORD our God?
Therefore we will wait for You,
Since You have made all these.

The LORD Will Not Relent

15 Then the LORD said to me, "*Even* if
Moses and Samuel stood before Me,
My mind *would* not *be* favorable toward this
people. Cast *them* out of My sight, and let
them go forth. 2And it shall be, if they say
to you, 'Where should we go?' then you
shall tell them, 'Thus says the LORD:

"Such as *are* for death, to death;
And such as *are* for the sword, to
the sword;
And such as *are* for the famine, to
the famine;
And such as *are* for the captivity,
to the captivity." '

3 "And I will appoint over them four
forms *of destruction,*" says the LORD: "the
sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of
the heavens and the beasts of the earth to
devour and destroy. 4I will hand them over
to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth,
because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah,
king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.

5 "For who will have pity on you, O
Jerusalem?
Or who will bemoan you?
Or who will turn aside to ask how you
are doing?
6 You have forsaken Me," says the LORD,
"You have gone backward.
Therefore I will stretch out My hand
against you and destroy you;
I am weary of relenting!
7 And I will winnow them with a
winnowing fan in the gates of
the land;
I will bereave *them* of children;
I will destroy My people,
Since they do not return from their ways.
8 Their widows will be increased to Me
more than the sand of the seas;
I will bring against them,
Against the mother of the young men,
A plunderer at noonday;
I will cause anguish and terror to fall
on them suddenly.

9 "She languishes who has borne seven;
She has breathed her last;
Her sun has gone down
While *it was* yet day;
She has been ashamed and confounded.
And the remnant of them I will deliver
to the sword
Before their enemies," says the LORD.

Jeremiah's Dejection

10 Woe is me, my mother,
That you have borne me,
A man of strife and a man of
contention to the whole earth!
I have neither lent for interest,

Nor have men lent to me for interest.
Every one of them curses me.

11 The LORD said:

"Surely it will be well with your
remnant;
Surely I will cause the enemy to
intercede with you
In the time of adversity and in the time
of affliction.
12 Can anyone break iron,
The northern iron and the bronze?
13 Your wealth and your treasures
I will give as plunder without price,
Because of all your sins,
Throughout your territories.
14 And I will make *you* cross over with[a]
your enemies
Into a land *which* you do not know;
For a fire is kindled in My anger,
Which shall burn upon you."

15 O LORD, You know;
Remember me and visit me,
And take vengeance for me on my
persecutors.
In Your enduring patience, do not take
me away.
Know that for Your sake I have suffered
rebuke.
16 Your words were found, and I ate them,
And Your word was to me the joy and
rejoicing of my heart;
For I am called by Your name,
O LORD God of hosts.
17 I did not sit in the assembly of the
mockers,
Nor did I rejoice;
I sat alone because of Your hand,
For You have filled me with indignation.
18 Why is my pain perpetual
And my wound incurable,
Which refuses to be healed?
Will You surely be to me like an
unreliable stream,
As waters *that* fail?

The LORD Reassures Jeremiah

19 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"If you return,
Then I will bring you back;
You shall stand before Me;
If you take out the precious from
the vile,
You shall be as My mouth.
Let them return to you,
But you must not return to them.
20 And I will make you to this people a
fortified bronze wall;
And they will fight against you,
But they shall not prevail against you;
For I *am* with you to save you
And deliver you," says the LORD.
21 "I will deliver you from the hand of the
wicked,
And I will redeem you from the grip of
the terrible."

Jeremiah's Lifestyle and Message

16 The word of the LORD also came to me, saying, 2 "You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place." 3 For thus says the LORD concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who bore them and their fathers who begot them in this land: 4 "They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, *but* they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth."

5 For thus says the LORD: "Do not enter the house of mourning, nor go to lament or bemoan them; for I have taken away My peace from this people," says the LORD, "lovingkindness and mercies. 6 Both the great and the small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried; neither shall men lament for them, cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. 7 Nor shall *men* break *bread* in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead; nor shall *men* give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother. 8 Also you shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink."

9 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will cause to cease from this place, before your eyes and in your days, the voice of mirth and the voice

15:14 [a] Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *cause you to serve* (compare 17:4).

of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom
and the voice of the bride.
10 "And it shall be, when you show this
people all these words, and they say to you,
'Why has the LORD pronounced all this great
disaster against us? Or what *is* our iniquity?
Or what *is* our sin that we have committed
against the LORD our God?' 11 then you shall
say to them, 'Because your fathers have for-
saken Me,' says the LORD; 'they have walked
after other gods and have served them and
worshiped them, and have forsaken Me and
not kept My law. 12 And you have done worse
than your fathers, for behold, each one fol-
lows the dictates of his own evil heart, so
that no one listens to Me. 13 Therefore I will
cast you out of this land into a land that you
do not know, neither you nor your fathers;
and there you shall serve other gods day
and night, where I will not show you favor.'

God Will Restore Israel

14 "Therefore behold, the days are com-
ing," says the LORD, "that it shall no more
be said, 'The LORD lives who brought up the
children of Israel from the land of Egypt,'
15 but, 'The LORD lives who brought up the
children of Israel from the land of the north
and from all the lands where He had driven
them.' For I will bring them back into their
land which I gave to their fathers.
16 "Behold, I will send for many fisher-
men," says the LORD, "and they shall fish
them; and afterward I will send for many
hunters, and they shall hunt them from
every mountain and every hill, and out of
the holes of the rocks. 17 For My eyes *are* on
all their ways; they are not hidden from
My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from
My eyes. 18 And first I will repay double for
their iniquity and their sin, because they
have defiled My land; they have filled My
inheritance with the carcasses of their
detestable and abominable idols."

19 O LORD, my strength and my fortress,
My refuge in the day of affliction,
The Gentiles shall come to You
From the ends of the earth and say,
"Surely our fathers have inherited lies,
Worthlessness and unprofitable *things*."
20 Will a man make gods for himself,
Which *are* not gods?
21 "Therefore behold, I will this once
cause them to know,
I will cause them to know
My hand and My might;
And they shall know that My name *is*
the LORD.

Judah's Sin and Punishment

17 "The sin of Judah *is* written with
a pen of iron;
With the point of a diamond *it is*
engraved
On the tablet of their heart,
And on the horns of your altars,
2 While their children remember
Their altars and their wooden images[a]
By the green trees on the high hills.
3 O My mountain in the field,
I will give as plunder your wealth, all
your treasures,
And your high places of sin within all
your borders.
4 And you, even yourself,
Shall let go of your heritage which I
gave you;
And I will cause you to serve your
enemies
In the land which you do not know;
For you have kindled a fire in My anger
which shall burn forever."

5 Thus says the LORD:

"Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man
And makes flesh his strength,
Whose heart departs from the LORD.
6 For he shall be like a shrub in the desert,
And shall not see when good comes,
But shall inhabit the parched places in
the wilderness,
In a salt land *which is* not inhabited.

7 "Blessed *is* the man who trusts in
the LORD,
And whose hope is the LORD.
8 For he shall be like a tree planted by
the waters,
Which spreads out its roots by the river,
And will not fear[a] when heat comes;
But its leaf will be green,
And will not be anxious in the year of
drought,
Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

17:2 [a]Hebrew *Asherim,* Canaanite deities **17:8** [a]Qere and Targum read *see.*

9 "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?
10 I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give every man according to his ways,
According to the fruit of his doings.

11 "*As* a partridge that broods but does not hatch,
So is he who gets riches, but not by right;
It will leave him in the midst of his days,
And at his end he will be a fool."

12 A glorious high throne from the beginning
Is the place of our sanctuary.
13 O LORD, the hope of Israel,
All who forsake You shall be ashamed.

"Those who depart from Me
Shall be written in the earth,
Because they have forsaken the LORD,
The fountain of living waters."

Jeremiah Prays for Deliverance

14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed;
Save me, and I shall be saved,
For You *are* my praise.
15 Indeed they say to me,
"Where *is* the word of the LORD?
Let it come now!"
16 As for me, I have not hurried away from *being* a shepherd *who* follows You,
Nor have I desired the woeful day;
You know what came out of my lips;
It was right there before You.
17 Do not be a terror to me;
You *are* my hope in the day of doom.
18 Let them be ashamed who persecute me,
But do not let me be put to shame;
Let them be dismayed,
But do not let me be dismayed.
Bring on them the day of doom,
And destroy them with double destruction!

Hallow the Sabbath Day

19 Thus the LORD said to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, by which the kings of Judah come in and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; 20 and say to them, 'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. 21 Thus says the LORD: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem; 22 nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. 23 But they did not obey nor incline their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear nor receive instruction.

24 "And it shall be, if you heed Me carefully," says the LORD, "to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it, 25 then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever. 26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah and from the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from the lowland, from the mountains and from the South, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, bringing sacrifices of praise to the house of the LORD.

27 "But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." '"

The Potter and the Clay

18 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as

the clay *is* in the potter's hand, so *are* you in
My hand, O house of Israel! 7The instant I
speak concerning a nation and concerning
a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and
to destroy *it,* 8if that nation against whom I
have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent
of the disaster that I thought to bring upon
it. 9And the instant I speak concerning a
nation and concerning a kingdom, to build
and to plant *it,* 10if it does evil in My sight
so that it does not obey My voice, then I
will relent concerning the good with which
I said I would benefit it.

11"Now therefore, speak to the men of
Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am
fashioning a disaster and devising a plan
against you. Return now every one from
his evil way, and make your ways and your
doings good." '"

God's Warning Rejected

12And they said, "That is hopeless! So
we will walk according to our own plans,
and we will every one obey the dictates of
his evil heart."

13Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Ask now among the Gentiles,
Who has heard such things?
The virgin of Israel has done a very
horrible thing.
14 Will *a man* leave the snow water of
Lebanon,
Which comes from the rock of the field?
Will the cold flowing waters be
forsaken for strange waters?

15 "Because My people have forgotten Me,
They have burned incense to
worthless idols.
And they have caused themselves to
stumble in their ways,
From the ancient paths,
To walk in pathways and not on a
highway,
16 To make their land desolate *and* a
perpetual hissing;
Everyone who passes by it will be
astonished
And shake his head.
17 I will scatter them as with an east
wind before the enemy;
I will show them[a] the back and not
the face
In the day of their calamity."

Jeremiah Persecuted

18Then they said, "Come and let us devise
plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not
perish from the priest, nor counsel from the
wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come
and let us attack him with the tongue, and
let us not give heed to any of his words."

19 Give heed to me, O LORD,
And listen to the voice of those who
contend with me!
20 Shall evil be repaid for good?
For they have dug a pit for my life.
Remember that I stood before You
To speak good for them,
To turn away Your wrath from them.
21 Therefore deliver up their children to
the famine,
And pour out their *blood*
By the force of the sword;
Let their wives *become* widows
And bereaved of their children.
Let their men be put to death,
Their young men *be* slain
By the sword in battle.
22 Let a cry be heard from their houses,
When You bring a troop suddenly
upon them;
For they have dug a pit to take me,
And hidden snares for my feet.
23 Yet, LORD, You know all their counsel
Which is against me, to slay *me.*
Provide no atonement for their iniquity,
Nor blot out their sin from Your sight;
But let them be overthrown before You.
Deal *thus* with them
In the time of Your anger.

The Sign of the Broken Flask

19 Thus says the LORD: "Go and get a
potter's earthen flask, and *take* some
of the elders of the people and some of the
elders of the priests. 2And go out to the
Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which *is* by the
entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim
there the words that I will tell you, 3and say,
'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah

18:17 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *look them in.*

and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle.

4"Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents 5(they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind), 6therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. 7And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives; their corpses I will give as meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. 8I will make this city desolate and a hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues. 9And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair." '

10"Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, 11and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Even so I will break this people and this city, as *one* breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury *them* in Tophet till *there is* no place to bury. 12Thus I will do to this place," says the LORD, "and to its inhabitants, and make this city like Tophet. 13And the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be defiled like the place of Tophet, because of all the houses on whose roofs they have burned incense to all the host of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods." '"

14Then Jeremiah came from Tophet, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the Lord's house and said to all the people, 15"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will bring on this city and on all her towns all the doom that I have pronounced against it, because they have stiffened their necks that they might not hear My words.'"

The Word of God to Pashhur

20 Now Pashhur the son of Immer, the priest who *was* also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. 2Then Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that *were* in the high gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the house of the LORD.

3And it happened on the next day that Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD has not called your name Pashhur, but Magor-Missabib.[a] 4For thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall see *it*. I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword. 5Moreover I will deliver all the wealth of this city, all its produce, and all its precious things; all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hand of their enemies, who will plunder them, seize them, and carry them to Babylon. 6And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. You shall go to Babylon, and there you shall die, and be buried there, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied lies.'"

Jeremiah's Unpopular Ministry

7 O LORD, You induced me, and I was persuaded;
You are stronger than I, and have prevailed.
I am in derision daily;
Everyone mocks me.
8 For when I spoke, I cried out;
I shouted, "Violence and plunder!"
Because the word of the LORD was made to me
A reproach and a derision daily.
9 Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him,

20:3 [a]Literally *Fear on Every Side*

In My Bones
Jeremiah 20:7–9

GLORIA GAITHER

I once believed that if I told the truth
And spoke my mind before the blind
Fell off the cliff, then we'd be safe
And all men would be glad.
Sweet hope would spring eternal
In the human breast.
God would be pleased;
He'd send a party
And, at last, I'd be invited
To the dance.
But that's a lie.
No one loves the truth.
The blind man loves to fall.
Hope may not come at all,
And God has stopped the music.
I can't dance, anyway.
But how to stop the heartburn?
The flame shut in my bones
Still burns away
Until I think I cannot
Stand to keep it in.
Indeed, I cannot.

Nor speak anymore in His name."
But *His word* was in my heart like a
burning fire
Shut up in my bones;
I was weary of holding *it* back,
And I could not.
10 For I heard many mocking:
"Fear on every side!"
"Report," *they say,* "and we will report it!"
All my acquaintances watched for my
stumbling, *saying,*
"Perhaps he can be induced;
Then we will prevail against him,
And we will take our revenge on him."

11 But the LORD *is* with me as a mighty,
awesome One.
Therefore my persecutors will stumble,
and will not prevail.
They will be greatly ashamed, for they
will not prosper.
Their everlasting confusion will never
be forgotten.
12 But, O LORD of hosts,
You who test the righteous,
And see the mind and heart,
Let me see Your vengeance on them;
For I have pleaded my cause before You.

Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD! For He has delivered the life of the poor from the hand of evildoers.
JEREMIAH 20:13

13 Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD!
For He has delivered the life of the poor
From the hand of evildoers.

14 Cursed *be* the day in which I was born!
Let the day not be blessed in which my
mother bore me!
15 Let the man *be* cursed
Who brought news to my father, saying,
"A male child has been born to you!"
Making him very glad.
16 And let that man be like the cities
Which the LORD overthrew, and did not
relent;
Let him hear the cry in the morning
And the shouting at noon,
17 Because he did not kill me from the
womb,
That my mother might have been my
grave,
And her womb always enlarged *with me.*
18 Why did I come forth from the womb
to see labor and sorrow,
That my days should be consumed
with shame?

Jerusalem's Doom Is Sealed

21 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, saying, 2"Please inquire of the LORD for us, for Nebuchadnezzar[a] king of Babylon makes war against us. Perhaps the LORD will deal with us according to all His wonderful works, that *the king* may go away from us."

3Then Jeremiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, 4'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, with which you fight against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans[a] who besiege you outside the walls; and I will assemble them in the midst of this city. 5I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath. 6I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence. 7And afterward," says the LORD, "I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, his servants and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence and the sword and the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those who seek their life; and he shall strike them with the edge of the sword. He shall not spare them, or have pity or mercy." '

8"Now you shall say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. 9He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes out and defects to the Chaldeans who besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be as a prize to him. 10For I have set My face against this city for adversity and not for good," says the LORD. "It shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire." '

21:2 [a]Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* and so elsewhere **21:4** [a]Or *Babylonians*

Message to the House of David

11 "And concerning the house of the king
of Judah, *say,* 'Hear the word of the LORD,
12 O house of David! Thus says the LORD:

"Execute judgment in the morning;
And deliver *him who is* plundered
Out of the hand of the oppressor,
Lest My fury go forth like fire
And burn so that no one can quench *it,*
Because of the evil of your doings.

13 "Behold, I *am* against you, O inhabitant
of the valley,
And rock of the plain," says the LORD,
"Who say, 'Who shall come down
against us?
Or who shall enter our dwellings?'
14 But I will punish you according to the
fruit of your doings," says the LORD;
"I will kindle a fire in its forest,
And it shall devour all things
around it." '"

22 Thus says the LORD: "Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word, 2 and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates! 3 Thus says the LORD: "Execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For if you indeed do this thing, then shall enter the gates of this house, riding on horses and in chariots, accompanied by servants and people, kings who sit on the throne of David. 5 But if you will not hear these words, I swear by Myself," says the LORD, "that this house shall become a desolation." '"

6 For thus says the LORD to the house of the king of Judah:

"You *are* Gilead to Me,
The head of Lebanon;
Yet I surely will make you a wilderness,
Cities *which* are not inhabited.
7 I will prepare destroyers against you,
Everyone with his weapons;
They shall cut down your choice cedars
And cast *them* into the fire.

8 And many nations will pass by this city; and everyone will say to his neighbor, 'Why has the LORD done so to this great city?' 9 Then they will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshiped other gods and served them.'"

10 Weep not for the dead, nor bemoan him;
Weep bitterly for him who goes away,
For he shall return no more,
Nor see his native country.

Message to the Sons of Josiah

11 For thus says the LORD concerning Shallum[a] the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, who went from this place: "He shall not return here anymore, 12 but he shall die in the place where they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.

13 "Woe to him who builds his house by
unrighteousness
And his chambers by injustice,
Who uses his neighbor's service
without wages
And gives him nothing for his work,
14 Who says, 'I will build myself a wide
house with spacious chambers,
And cut out windows for it,
Paneling *it* with cedar
And painting *it* with vermilion.'

15 "Shall you reign because you enclose
yourself in cedar?
Did not your father eat and drink,
And do justice and righteousness?
Then *it was* well with him.
16 He judged the cause of the poor and
needy;
Then *it was* well.
Was not this knowing Me?" says the LORD.
17 "Yet your eyes and your heart *are* for
nothing but your covetousness,
For shedding innocent blood,
And practicing oppression and violence."

18 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

"They shall not lament for him,
Saying, 'Alas, my brother!' or 'Alas,
my sister!'

22:11 [a]Also called *Jehoahaz*

They shall not lament for him,
Saying, 'Alas, master!' or 'Alas, his glory!'
19 He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey,
Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

20 "Go up to Lebanon, and cry out,
And lift up your voice in Bashan;
Cry from Abarim,
For all your lovers are destroyed.
21 I spoke to you in your prosperity,
But you said, 'I will not hear.'
This *has been* your manner from your youth,
That you did not obey My voice.
22 The wind shall eat up all your rulers,
And your lovers shall go into captivity;
Surely then you will be ashamed and humiliated
For all your wickedness.
23 O inhabitant of Lebanon,
Making your nest in the cedars,
How gracious will you be when pangs come upon you,
Like the pain of a woman in labor?

Message to Coniah

24 "*As* I live," says the LORD, "though Coniah[a] the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; 25 and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand *of those* whose face you fear—the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. 27 But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return.

28 "Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol—
A vessel in which *is* no pleasure?
Why are they cast out, he and his descendants,
And cast into a land which they do not know?
29 O earth, earth, earth,
Hear the word of the LORD!
30 Thus says the LORD:
'Write this man down as childless,
A man *who* shall not prosper in his days;
For none of his descendants shall prosper,
Sitting on the throne of David,
And ruling anymore in Judah.'"

The Branch of Righteousness

23 "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the LORD. 2 Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the LORD. 3 "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD.

5 "Behold, *the* days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper,
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
6 In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this *is* His name by which He will be called:

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.[a]

7 "Therefore, behold, *the* days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 8 but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land."

False Prophets and Empty Oracles

9 My heart within me is broken
Because of the prophets;
All my bones shake.
I am like a drunken man,

22:24 [a]Also called *Jeconiah* and *Jehoiachin* **23:6** [a]Hebrew *YHWH Tsidkenu*

And like a man whom wine has overcome,
Because of the LORD,
And because of His holy words.
10 For the land is full of adulterers;
For because of a curse the land mourns.
The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up.
Their course of life is evil,
And their might *is* not right.

11 "For both prophet and priest are profane;
Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness," says the LORD.
12 "Therefore their way shall be to them
Like slippery *ways;*
In the darkness they shall be driven on
And fall in them;
For I will bring disaster on them,
The year of their punishment," says the LORD.
13 "And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria:
They prophesied by Baal
And caused My people Israel to err.
14 Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem:
They commit adultery and walk in lies;
They also strengthen the hands of evildoers,
So that no one turns back from his wickedness.
All of them are like Sodom to Me,
And her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

15 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets:

'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood,
And make them drink the water of gall;
For from the prophets of Jerusalem
Profaneness has gone out into all the land.'"

16 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you.
They make you worthless;
They speak a vision of their own heart,
Not from the mouth of the LORD.
17 They continually say to those who despise Me,
'The LORD has said, "You shall have peace" ';
And *to* everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say,
'No evil shall come upon you.'"

18 For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD,
And has perceived and heard His word?
Who has marked His word and heard *it?*
19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in fury—
A violent whirlwind!
It will fall violently on the head of the wicked.
20 The anger of the LORD will not turn back
Until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart.
In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.

21 "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran.
I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.
22 But if they had stood in My counsel,
And had caused My people to hear My words,
Then they would have turned them from their evil way
And from the evil of their doings.

23 "*Am* I a God near at hand," says the LORD,
"And not a God afar off?



24 Can anyone hide himself in secret
places,
So I shall not see him?" says the LORD;
"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says
the LORD.

25"I have heard what the prophets have
said who prophesy lies in My name, saying,
'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' 26How
long will *this* be in the heart of the prophets
who prophesy lies? Indeed *they are* prophets
of the deceit of their own heart, 27who try
to make My people forget My name by their
dreams which everyone tells his neighbor,
as their fathers forgot My name for Baal.

28 "The prophet who has a dream, let him
tell a dream;
And he who has My word, let him
speak My word faithfully.
What *is* the chaff to the wheat?" says
the LORD.
29 "*Is* not My word like a fire?" says the
LORD,
"And like a hammer *that* breaks the rock
in pieces?

30"Therefore behold, I *am* against the
prophets," says the LORD, "who steal My
words every one from his neighbor. 31Behold,
I *am* against the prophets," says the LORD,
"who use their tongues and say, 'He says.'
32Behold, I *am* against those who prophesy
false dreams," says the LORD, "and tell them,
and cause My people to err by their lies
and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send
them or command them; therefore they shall
not profit this people at all," says the LORD.

33"So when these people or the prophet
or the priest ask you, saying, 'What is the
oracle of the LORD?' you shall then say to
them, 'What oracle?'[a] I will even forsake
you," says the LORD. 34"And *as for* the prophet
and the priest and the people who say, 'The
oracle of the LORD!' I will even punish that
man and his house. 35Thus every one of you
shall say to his neighbor, and every one to his
brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' and,
'What has the LORD spoken?' 36And the ora-
cle of the LORD you shall mention no more.
For every man's word will be his oracle, for
you have perverted the words of the living
God, the LORD of hosts, our God. 37Thus you
shall say to the prophet, 'What has the LORD
answered you?' and, 'What has the LORD spo-
ken?' 38But since you say, 'The oracle of the
LORD!' therefore thus says the LORD: 'Because
you say this word, "The oracle of the LORD!"
and I have sent to you, saying, "Do not say,
'The oracle of the LORD!'" 39therefore behold,
I, even I, will utterly forget you and forsake
you, and the city that I gave you and your
fathers, and *will cast you* out of My presence.
40And I will bring an everlasting reproach
upon you, and a perpetual shame, which
shall not be forgotten.'"

The Sign of Two Baskets of Figs

24 The LORD showed me, and there were
two baskets of figs set before the
temple of the LORD, after Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon had carried away captive
Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah,
and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen
and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought
them to Babylon. 2One basket *had* very good
figs, like the figs *that are* first ripe; and the
other basket *had* very bad figs which could
not be eaten, they were so bad. 3Then the
LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very
good; and the bad, very bad, which cannot
be eaten, they are so bad."

4Again the word of the LORD came to me,
saying, 5"Thus says the LORD, the God of
Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowl-
edge those who are carried away captive
from Judah, whom I have sent out of this
place for *their own* good, into the land of the
Chaldeans. 6For I will set My eyes on them for
good, and I will bring them back to this land; I
will build them and not pull *them* down, and I
will plant them and not pluck *them* up. 7Then
I will give them a heart to know Me, that I *am*
the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I
will be their God, for they shall return to Me
with their whole heart.

8'And as the bad figs which cannot be
eaten, they are so bad'—surely thus says the
LORD—'so will I give up Zedekiah the king of
Judah, his princes, the residue of Jerusalem
who remain in this land, and those who dwell
in the land of Egypt. 9I will deliver them to
trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth,
for *their* harm, *to be* a reproach and a byword,

23:33 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read '*You are the burden.*'

a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them. 10And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.'"

Seventy Years of Desolation

25 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which *was* the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), 2which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: 3"From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this *is* the twenty-third year in which the word of the LORD has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened. 4And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them,* but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. 5They said, 'Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. 6Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.' 7Yet you have not listened to Me," says the LORD, "that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

8"Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Because you have not heard My words, 9behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' says the LORD, 'and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. 10Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. 11And this whole land shall be a desolation *and* an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

12'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. 13So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. 14(For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)'"

Judgment on the Nations

15For thus says the LORD God of Israel to me: "Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. 16And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them."

17Then I took the cup from the LORD's hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the LORD had sent me: 18Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as *it is* this day; 19Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, and all his people; 20all the mixed multitude, all the kings of the land of Uz, all the kings of the land of the Philistines (namely, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod); 21Edom, Moab, and the people of Ammon; 22all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which *are* across the sea; 23Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all *who are* in the farthest corners; 24all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed multitude who dwell in the desert; 25all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes; 26all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another; and all the kingdoms of the world which *are* on the face of the earth. Also the king of Sheshach[a] shall drink after them.

27"Therefore you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Drink, be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you." ' 28And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "You shall certainly

25:26 [a]A code word for Babylon (compare 51:41)



drink! 29For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth," says the LORD of hosts.'

30"Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:

'The LORD will roar from on high,
And utter His voice from His holy habitation;
He will roar mightily against His fold.
He will give a shout, as those who tread *the grapes,*
Against all the inhabitants of the earth.
31 A noise will come to the ends of the earth—
For the LORD has a controversy with the nations;
He will plead His case with all flesh.
He will give those *who are* wicked to the sword,' says the LORD."

32Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Behold, disaster shall go forth
From nation to nation,
And a great whirlwind shall be raised up
From the farthest parts of the earth.

33"And at that day the slain of the LORD shall be from *one* end of the earth even to the *other* end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground.

34 "Wail, shepherds, and cry!
Roll about *in the ashes,*
You leaders of the flock!
For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions are fulfilled;
You shall fall like a precious vessel.
35 And the shepherds will have no way to flee,
Nor the leaders of the flock to escape.
36 A voice of the cry of the shepherds,
And a wailing of the leaders to the flock *will be heard.*
For the LORD has plundered their pasture,
37 And the peaceful dwellings are cut down
Because of the fierce anger of the LORD.
38 He has left His lair like the lion;
For their land is desolate
Because of the fierceness of the Oppressor,
And because of His fierce anger."

Jeremiah Saved from Death

26 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship *in* the LORD's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not diminish a word. 3Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, that I may relent concerning the calamity which I purpose to bring on them because of the evil of their doings.' 4And you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: "If you will not listen to Me, to walk in My law which I have set before you, 5to heed the words of My servants the prophets whom I sent to you, both rising up early and sending *them* (but you have not heeded), 6then I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." '"

7So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. 8Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, "You will surely die! 9Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without an inhabitant'?" And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

10When the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and sat down in the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's *house.* 11And the priests and the prophets spoke to the princes and all the people, saying, "This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears."

12Then Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and all the people, saying: "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against

this city with all the words that you have heard. 13Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; then the LORD will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you. 14As for me, here I am, in your hand; do with me as seems good and proper to you. 15But know for certain that if you put me to death, you will surely bring innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on its inhabitants; for truly the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing."

16So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."

17Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: 18"Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple[a]
Like the bare hills of the forest." '[b]

19Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD's favor? And the LORD relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves."

20Now there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah. 21And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Urijah heard *it,* he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt. 22Then Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor, and *other* men *who went* with him to Egypt. 23And they brought Urijah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

24Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

Symbol of the Bonds and Yokes

27 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim[a] the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,[b] 2"Thus says the LORD to me: 'Make for yourselves bonds and yokes, and put them on your neck, 3and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon, by the hand of the messengers who come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. 4And command them to say to their masters, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel—thus you shall say to your masters: 5'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. 6And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. 7So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. 8And it shall be, *that* the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,' says the LORD, 'with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. 9Therefore do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who speak to you, saying, "You shall not serve the king of Babylon." 10For they prophesy a lie to you, to remove you far from your land; and I will drive you out, and you will perish. 11But the nations that bring their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let them remain in their own land,' says the LORD, 'and they shall till it and dwell in it.'" '"

12I also spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, "Bring

26:18 [a]Literally *house* [b]Compare Micah 3:12 **27:1** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts, Arabic, and Syriac read *Zedekiah* (compare 27:3, 12; 28:1). [b]Septuagint omits verse 1.

your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live! 13Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD has spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? 14Therefore do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you, saying, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon,' for they prophesy a lie to you; 15for I have not sent them," says the LORD, "yet they prophesy a lie in My name, that I may drive you out, and that you may perish, you and the prophets who prophesy to you."

16Also I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, saying, "Behold, the vessels of the LORD's house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon"; for they prophesy a lie to you. 17Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon, and live! Why should this city be laid waste? 18But if they *are* prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, *in* the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, do not go to Babylon.'

19"For thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, concerning the Sea, concerning the carts, and concerning the remainder of the vessels that remain in this city, 20which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem— 21yes, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem: 22'They shall be carried to Babylon, and there they shall be until the day that I visit them,' says the LORD. 'Then I will bring them up and restore them to this place.'"



GORDON MOTE • Homecoming Artist, Pianist, Songwriter

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. | JEREMIAH 29:11

My mom claimed this verse for my brother Michael and me when we were born. People felt sorry for Mom and Dad and for us kids because we were born blind. But our parents were people of faith. They knew God didn't make mistakes. They knew He had a plan, even though they didn't know what that plan was at the time.

My mom claimed Jeremiah 29:11 over us when we were still babies. She trusted that His plan for us would be better than any human plan. And it's really true. God's plan is always perfect. If we hadn't grown up around that kind of faith, we may not have tried so many of the things we tried. Mom and Dad always encouraged us to do whatever we wanted to. Michael and I never knew we couldn't do something that people with sight could do, because we were never told we couldn't.

Hananiah's Falsehood and Doom

28 And it happened in the same year,
at the beginning of the reign of
Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year
and in the fifth month, *that* Hananiah the
son of Azur the prophet, who *was* from
Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the
LORD in the presence of the priests and
of all the people, saying, 2"Thus speaks
the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, say-
ing: 'I have broken the yoke of the king of
Babylon. 3Within two full years I will bring
back to this place all the vessels of the
LORD's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of
Babylon took away from this place and car-
ried to Babylon. 4And I will bring back to
this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim,
king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah
who went to Babylon,' says the LORD, 'for I
will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.'"

5Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to
the prophet Hananiah in the presence of
the priests and in the presence of all the
people who stood in the house of the LORD,
6and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen!
The LORD do so; the LORD perform your
words which you have prophesied, to bring
back the vessels of the LORD's house and
all who were carried away captive, from
Babylon to this place. 7Nevertheless hear
now this word that I speak in your hear-
ing and in the hearing of all the people:
8The prophets who have been before me
and before you of old prophesied against
many countries and great kingdoms—of
war and disaster and pestilence. 9As for the
prophet who prophesies of peace, when
the word of the prophet comes to pass, the
prophet will be known *as* one whom the
LORD has truly sent."

10Then Hananiah the prophet took
the yoke off the prophet Jeremiah's neck
and broke it. 11And Hananiah spoke in the
presence of all the people, saying, "Thus
says the LORD: 'Even so I will break the yoke
of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from
the neck of all nations within the space of

We often surprised people. We were two of the first blind kids to mainstream in the public school system. I marched in the marching band. Today, my brother lives in Atlanta with his wife and has a successful radio career, and I have exceeded my wildest dreams, because we grew up believing that God's plan is always right. He always blesses us when we submit to Him. When we know that and trust Him fully, we never have to second-guess what might have happened if we had sight or if life had dealt us a different hand.

Now, as a father, I have claimed that same verse over all three of my children. It is my favorite verse. It is the verse I wrote on the cement foundation of the new high school building in our community before the carpeting went in. And if I didn't believe this verse, or if God had given me sight, I probably would not have pursued music. Who knows, I might have been in sports broadcasting!

At the end of the day, it's all about God's plan, and He has created us for that plan. He knows exactly what's going to happen, and we can place our full trust in His promise to give us hope and a future. If we just let him put us where He wants us to be, that perfect plan comes together every time.

two full years.'" And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

12 Now the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 13 "Go and tell Hananiah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "You have broken the yokes of wood, but you have made in their place yokes of iron." 14 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him. I have given him the beasts of the field also." '"

15 Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Hear now, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you, but you make this people trust in a lie. 16 Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have taught rebellion against the LORD.'"

17 So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.

Jeremiah's Letter to the Captives

29 Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive—to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. 2 (This happened after Jeconiah the king, the



IVAN PARKER • Homecoming Artist, Soloist

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. | JEREMIAH 29:11

I received this scripture at the time I was contemplating a solo ministry, and I could not see the future. I was with a very successful quartet in the gospel music circle. Male soloists were a rarity, but yet I felt a pull toward this unknown path. If we could see the future, we would not need to walk by faith or trust our path to Christ, because by *seeing* we would know. But I had to trust the Lord and *His* plans for me, not the plans I could make on my own. Jesus, in His infinite wisdom, sees our past, present, and future as one moment in time. He gently leads us in the direction of joy, hope, and love. He allows us to choose what path to follow for our own life, and invites us to prayerfully consider the righteousness of God and His course versus our own. How wonderful it is that God's plan for us is that we will have prosperity and hope, not condemnation. We tend to self-destruct by overanalyzing our future instead of asking God to reveal His will and keep us on track, then trusting Him with the details.

I am so thankful that God sees me and my past, present, and future and with open, loving arms says so quietly and sweetly, "This way, My child . . . I am leading you, sometimes carrying you and always walking every step with you. I love you."

queen mother, the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.) 3*The letter was sent* by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying,

4 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon:

5 Build houses and dwell *in them;*
plant gardens and eat their fruit.
6Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace. 8For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the LORD.

10 For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. 11For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13And you will seek Me and find *Me,* when you search for Me with all your heart. 14I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

15 Because you have said, "The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon"— 16therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, concerning all the people who dwell in this city, and concerning your brethren who have not gone out with you into captivity— 17thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, I will send on them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like rotten figs that cannot be eaten, they are so bad. 18And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence; and I will deliver them to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth—to be a curse, an astonishment, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, 19because they have not heeded My words, says the LORD, which I sent to them by My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them;* neither would you heed, says the LORD. 20Therefore hear the word of the LORD, all you of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon.

21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who prophesy a lie to you in My name: Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes. 22And because of them a curse shall be taken up by all the captivity of Judah who *are* in Babylon, saying, "The LORD make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire"; 23because they have done disgraceful things in Israel, have committed adultery with their neighbors'

wives, and have spoken lying words
in My name, which I have not com-
manded them. Indeed I know, and
am a witness, says the LORD.

24 You shall also speak to Shemaiah
the Nehelamite, saying, 25Thus
speaks the LORD of hosts, the God
of Israel, saying: You have sent let-
ters in your name to all the people
who *are* at Jerusalem, to Zephaniah
the son of Maaseiah the priest, and
to all the priests, saying, 26"The
LORD has made you priest instead
of Jehoiada the priest, so that there
should be officers *in* the house
of the LORD over every man *who* is
demented and considers himself
a prophet, that you should put
him in prison and in the stocks.
27Now therefore, why have you not
rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth who
makes himself a prophet to you?
28For he has sent to us *in* Babylon,
saying, 'This *captivity is* long; build
houses and dwell *in them,* and plant
gardens and eat their fruit.'"

29 Now Zephaniah the priest read
this letter in the hearing of
Jeremiah the prophet. 30Then the
word of the LORD came to Jeremiah,
saying: 31Send to all those in
captivity, saying, Thus says the
LORD concerning Shemaiah the
Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has
prophesied to you, and I have not
sent him, and he has caused you
to trust in a lie— 32therefore thus
says the LORD: Behold, I will punish
Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his
family: he shall not have anyone to



LULU ROMAN • Homecoming Artist, Soloist

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive. | JEREMIAH 29:11–14

Jeremiah sent this letter from Jerusalem to the elders of the people who God had been taken away from Jerusalem as captives to Babylon, telling them that God had plans for them if they would do as he had told Jeremiah to tell them.

Being sent away has been the very root of my life. Being born in a home for unwed mothers and then dumped with a thyroid problem in an orphanage, I felt as if I were the true "unlovable one" for most of my life. I lived with great anger and self-loathing most of my life, and I made devastatingly bad choices. I spent many years of my life in trouble and in harm's way at my own hands. I tried to cover all the pain with drugs and an unbelievably reckless lifestyle. I had a very bitter and hurt spirit and believed that if there

dwell among this people, nor shall
he see the good that I will do for
My people, says the LORD, because
he has taught rebellion against the
LORD.

Restoration of Israel and Judah

30 The word that came to Jeremiah
from the LORD, saying, 2"Thus speaks
the LORD God of Israel, saying: 'Write in a
book for yourself all the words that I have
spoken to you. 3For behold, the days are
coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will bring
back from captivity My people Israel and
Judah,' says the LORD. 'And I will cause them
to return to the land that I gave to their
fathers, and they shall possess it.'"

4Now these *are* the words that the LORD
spoke concerning Israel and Judah.

5"For thus says the LORD:

'We have heard a voice of trembling,
Of fear, and not of peace.
6 Ask now, and see,
Whether a man is ever in labor with
child?
So why do I see every man *with* his
hands on his loins
Like a woman in labor,
And all faces turned pale?
7 Alas! For that day *is* great,
So that none *is* like it;
And it *is* the time of Jacob's trouble,
But he shall be saved out of it.

8 'For it shall come to pass in that day,'
Says the LORD of hosts,
'*That* I will break his yoke from
your neck,
And will burst your bonds;
Foreigners shall no more enslave them.
9 But they shall serve the LORD their God,

was a God, He didn't care about me because He had dumped me as a child. I had no plans for myself; I only wanted to survive and keep everyone away from me so that I wouldn't be hurt anymore.

After experiencing two drug busts, giving birth to a baby born addicted to the drugs, being kicked off the television show *Hee Haw* for using drugs, and truly having no plans for my life, I ran into one of my friends from the orphans' home. She took me to Beverly Hills Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, where I eventually gave my life to Jesus and was instantly delivered from drugs and totally set free!

After thirty-eight years of walking with Jesus, I now look back over my journey and see that He had *great* plans for my life. I never sang until I gave my heart to Jesus; He literally gave me the gift of song—in my life and in my heart! This precious gift comes from God, and He has blessed my life with His plans to share His gifts with everyone I can. I am thankful for His hand of mercy and grace extended to a life that was broken from the very beginning. It took many years for me to seek His face and for Him to literally set me free from all the anger and hurt. I now walk in forgiveness and have that peace that passes human understanding that His Word talks about (Phil. 4:7). Now that little orphan girl who believed God threw her away knows He chose me to be an instrument of His love and to tell everyone that He loves without boundaries! There is nothing we can do that will make Him love us any less than He did the second He breathed life into us, because *He truly has plans of hope for every life!*

Gospel Songs

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."

JEREMIAH 31:3

THE LORD'S love is everlasting, so it only seems appropriate that a song called "The Love of God" would have ancient roots. In the eleventh century, a Jewish cantor in Worms—the oldest city in Germany—named Meir ben Isaac Nehorai wrote an acrostic poem called the *Akdamut* in Aramaic. Nehorai wrote it to precede the reciting of the Ten Commandments during Shavuot, which is a celebration of God's gift of the Torah to the Jewish people. Nearly a millennium later, a German immigrant, Frederick Lehman, was working in a fruit packing plant in California when he was inspired to compose a song. About this experience, he wrote:

> *While at camp-meeting in a mid-western state, some fifty years ago in our early ministry, an evangelist climaxed his message by quoting the last stanza of this song. The profound depths of the line moved us to preserve the words for future generations.*
>
> *Not until we had come to California did this urge find fulfillment, and that at a time when circumstances forced us to hard manual labor.*
>
> *One day, during short intervals of inattention to our work, we picked up a scrap of paper and, seated upon an empty lemon box pushed against the wall, with a stub pencil, added the (first) two stanzas and chorus of the song.*

Lehman, himself, knew the everlasting love of God, having accepted Christ at the age of eleven and spending his early adulthood as a pastor in five different churches across the Midwest. He also developed a love for gospel music and wrote enough songs to fill five songbooks. With his strong foundation of faith, Lehman was able to see God's love even in the midst of trying times, having to set aside full-time ministry to support his family. Even today, nearly one hundred years later, we still sing this song, praising the Lord of old for His everlasting love, for "we love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

The Love of God

Frederick M. Lehman, 1917

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star,
And reaches to the lowest hell;
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled,
And pardoned from his sin.

Refrain:
Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
The saints' and angels' song.

When hoary time shall pass away,
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
When men who here refuse to pray,
On rocks and hills and mountains call,
God's love so sure, shall still endure,
All measureless and strong;
Redeeming grace to Adam's race—
The saints' and angels' song.

Refrain

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

And David their king,
Whom I will raise up for them.

10 'Therefore do not fear, O My servant
Jacob,' says the LORD,
'Nor be dismayed, O Israel;
For behold, I will save you from afar,
And your seed from the land of their
captivity.
Jacob shall return, have rest and be
quiet,
And no one shall make *him* afraid.
11 For I *am* with you,' says the LORD, 'to
save you;
Though I make a full end of all nations
where I have scattered you,
Yet I will not make a complete end of
you.
But I will correct you in justice,
And will not let you go altogether
unpunished.'
12 "For thus says the LORD:

'Your affliction *is* incurable,
Your wound *is* severe.
13 *There is* no one to plead your cause,
That you may be bound up;
You have no healing medicines.
14 All your lovers have forgotten you;
They do not seek you;
For I have wounded you with the
wound of an enemy,
With the chastisement of a cruel one,
For the multitude of your iniquities,
Because your sins have increased.
15 Why do you cry about your affliction?
Your sorrow *is* incurable.
Because of the multitude of your
iniquities,
Because your sins have increased,
I have done these things to you.

16 'Therefore all those who devour you
shall be devoured;
And all your adversaries, every one of
them, shall go into captivity;
Those who plunder you shall become
plunder,
And all who prey upon you I will make
a prey.
17 For I will restore health to you
And heal you of your wounds,' says the
LORD,
'Because they called you an outcast
saying:
"This *is* Zion;
No one seeks her." '

18 "Thus says the LORD:

'Behold, I will bring back the captivity
of Jacob's tents,
And have mercy on his dwelling places;
The city shall be built upon its own
mound,
And the palace shall remain according
to its own plan.
19 Then out of them shall proceed
thanksgiving
And the voice of those who make merry;
I will multiply them, and they shall not
diminish;
I will also glorify them, and they shall
not be small.
20 Their children also shall be as before,
And their congregation shall be
established before Me;
And I will punish all who oppress
them.
21 Their nobles shall be from among them,
And their governor shall come from
their midst;
Then I will cause him to draw near,
And he shall approach Me;
For who *is* this who pledged his heart
to approach Me?' says the LORD.
22 'You shall be My people,
And I will be your God.'"

23 Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD
Goes forth with fury,
A continuing whirlwind;
It will fall violently on the head of the
wicked.
24 The fierce anger of the LORD will not
return until He has done it,
And until He has performed the
intents of His heart.

In the latter days you will consider it.

The Remnant of Israel Saved

31 "At the same time," says the LORD, "I
will be the God of all the families of
Israel, and they shall be My people."
2 Thus says the LORD:

"The people who survived the sword
Found grace in the wilderness—
Israel, when I went to give him rest."

3 The LORD has appeared of old to me,
saying:
"Yes, I have loved you with an
everlasting love;
Therefore with lovingkindness I have
drawn you.
4 Again I will build you, and you shall be
rebuilt,
O virgin of Israel!
You shall again be adorned with your
tambourines,
And shall go forth in the dances of
those who rejoice.
5 You shall yet plant vines on the
mountains of Samaria;
The planters shall plant and eat *them*
as ordinary food.
6 For there shall be a day
When the watchmen will cry on Mount
Ephraim,
'Arise, and let us go up *to* Zion,
To the LORD our God.'"

For thus says the LORD: "Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel!'"

JEREMIAH 31:7

7 For thus says the LORD:

"Sing with gladness for Jacob,
And shout among the chief of the
nations;
Proclaim, give praise, and say,
'O LORD, save Your people,
The remnant of Israel!'
8 Behold, I will bring them from the
north country,
And gather them from the ends of the
earth,
Among them the blind and the lame,
The woman with child
And the one who labors with child,
together;

Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, streaming to the goodness of the LORD—for wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd; their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all.

JEREMIAH 31:12

A great throng shall return there.
9 They shall come with weeping,
And with supplications I will lead them.
I will cause them to walk by the rivers
of waters,
In a straight way in which they shall
not stumble;
For I am a Father to Israel,
And Ephraim *is* My firstborn.

10 "Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
And declare *it* in the isles afar off,
and say,
'He who scattered Israel will gather him,
And keep him as a shepherd *does* his
flock.'
11 For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
And ransomed him from the hand of
one stronger than he.
12 Therefore they shall come and sing in
the height of Zion,
Streaming to the goodness of the
LORD—
For wheat and new wine and oil,
For the young of the flock and the herd;
Their souls shall be like a well-watered
garden,
And they shall sorrow no more at all.

13 "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the
dance,
And the young men and the old,
together;
For I will turn their mourning to joy,
Will comfort them,
And make them rejoice rather than
sorrow.
14 I will satiate the soul of the priests
with abundance,
And My people shall be satisfied with
My goodness, says the LORD."

Mercy on Ephraim

15 Thus says the LORD:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation *and* bitter weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted for her children,
Because they *are* no more."

16 Thus says the LORD:

"Refrain your voice from weeping,
And your eyes from tears;
For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD,
And they shall come back from the land of the enemy.
17 There is hope in your future, says the LORD,
That *your* children shall come back to their own border.

18 "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself:
'You have chastised me, and I was chastised,
Like an untrained bull;
Restore me, and I will return,
For You *are* the LORD my God.
19 Surely, after my turning, I repented;
And after I was instructed, I struck myself on the thigh;
I was ashamed, yes, even humiliated,
Because I bore the reproach of my youth.'
20 *Is* Ephraim My dear son?
Is he a pleasant child?
For though I spoke against him,
I earnestly remember him still;
Therefore My heart yearns for him;
I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD.

21 "Set up signposts,
Make landmarks;
Set your heart toward the highway,
The way in *which* you went.
Turn back, O virgin of Israel,
Turn back to these your cities.
22 How long will you gad about,
O you backsliding daughter?
For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth—
A woman shall encompass a man."

Future Prosperity of Judah

23 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "They shall again use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I bring back their captivity: 'The LORD bless you, O home of justice, *and* mountain of holiness!' 24 And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all its cities together, farmers and those going out with flocks. 25 For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."

26 After this I awoke and looked around, and my sleep was sweet to me.

27 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. 28 And it shall come to pass, *that* as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD. 29 In those days they shall say no more:

'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge.'

30 But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

A New Covenant

31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with



the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 32not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them,[a] says the LORD. 33But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

35 Thus says the LORD,
Who gives the sun for a light by day,
The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night,
Who disturbs the sea,
And its waves roar
(The LORD of hosts *is* His name):

36 "If those ordinances depart
From before Me, says the LORD,
Then the seed of Israel shall also cease
From being a nation before Me forever."

37Thus says the LORD:

"If heaven above can be measured,
And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,
I will also cast off all the seed of Israel
For all that they have done, says the LORD.

38"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that the city shall be built for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39The surveyor's line shall again extend straight forward over the hill Gareb; then it shall turn toward Goath. 40And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the Brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, *shall be* holy to the LORD. It shall not be plucked up or thrown down anymore forever."

Jeremiah Buys a Field

32 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which *was in* the king of Judah's house. 3For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, "Why do you prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; 4and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face,[a] and see him eye to eye; 5then he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall be until I visit him," says the LORD; "though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed" '?"

6And Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 7'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, "Buy my field which *is* in Anathoth, for the right of redemption *is* yours to buy *it*." ' 8Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance *is* yours, and the redemption yours; buy *it* for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. 9So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who *was* in Anathoth, and weighed *out to* him the money—seventeen shekels of silver. 10And I signed the deed and sealed *it,* took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. 11So I took the purchase deed, *both* that which was sealed *according* to the law and custom, and that which was open; 12and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's *son,* and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.

13"Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, 14'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the

31:32 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *and I turned away from them.* **32:4** [a]Literally *mouth to mouth*

God of Israel: "Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days." [15]For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." '

Jeremiah Prays for Understanding

[16]"Now when I had delivered the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying: [17]'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. [18]*You* show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them—the Great, the Mighty God, whose name *is* the LORD of hosts. [19]*You are* great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes *are* open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. [20]You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among *other* men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day. [21]You have brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror; [22]You have given them this land, of which You swore to their fathers to give them—"a land flowing with milk and honey."[a] [23]And they came in and took possession of it, but they have not obeyed Your voice or walked in Your law. They have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore You have caused all this calamity to come upon them.

[24]'Look, the siege mounds! They have come to the city to take it; and the city has

32:22 [a]Exodus 3:8



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul. | JEREMIAH 32:41

When I hear the expression, "with all the heart and soul," I register, "Give it your all; hold nothing back; put everything into it, put out 100 percent." We know that we fall short of the command to love the Lord our God with all of our soul, heart, strength, and mind. It would be wonderful if we could actually give the Lord 100 percent, but we know it is impossible. Even if we could, we would have to confess that we are just unprofitable servants who have not exceeded duty. There is a thrilling revelation of the Lord in this passage. The Promised Land of milk and honey has always represented the Lord, the life of milk and honey. God longs with a great longing to plant His people in the Promised Land. To drive home His strong desire, He uses the expression, "with all My heart and with all My soul." Imagine that expression applied to the Lord Himself! How can I doubt that I will fully possess Christ, the life of milk and honey, when He has pledged with all His heart and soul to make it happen?

been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword and famine and pestilence. What You have spoken has happened; there You see *it!* 25And You have said to me, O Lord GOD, "Buy the field for money, and take witnesses"!—yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.'"

God's Assurance of the People's Return

26Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 27"Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? 28Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it. 29And the Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and set fire to this city and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs they have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger; 30because the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only evil before Me from their youth. For the children of Israel have provoked Me only to anger with the work of their hands,' says the LORD. 31'For this city has been to Me *a provocation of* My anger and My fury from the day that they built it, even to this day; so I will remove it from before My face 32because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger—they, their kings, their princes, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 33And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching *them,* yet they have not listened to receive instruction. 34But they set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. 35And they built the high places of Baal which *are* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.'

36"Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: 37Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38They shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. 40And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 41Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.'

42"For thus says the LORD: 'Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. 43And fields will be bought in this land of which you say, "*It is* desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans." 44Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal *them,* and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,' says the LORD."

Excellence of the Restored Nation

33 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the prison, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD who made it, the LORD who formed it to establish it (the LORD *is* His name): 3'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

4"For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah, which have been pulled down *to fortify*[a] against the siege mounds and the sword: 5'They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but *only* to fill their places[a] with the dead bodies of men whom I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city. 6Behold, I will

33:4 [a]Compare Isaiah 22:10 **33:5** [a]Compare 2 Kings 23:14

bring it health and healing; I will heal them
and reveal to them the abundance of peace
and truth. 7And I will cause the captives of
Judah and the captives of Israel to return,
and will rebuild those places as at the first.
8I will cleanse them from all their iniquity
by which they have sinned against Me, and
I will pardon all their iniquities by which
they have sinned and by which they have
transgressed against Me. 9Then it shall be
to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor
before all nations of the earth, who shall
hear all the good that I do to them; they
shall fear and tremble for all the goodness
and all the prosperity that I provide for it.'

10"Thus says the LORD: 'Again there shall
be heard in this place—of which you say,
"It *is* desolate, without man and without
beast"—in the cities of Judah, in the streets
of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man
and without inhabitant and without beast,
11the voice of joy and the voice of gladness,
the voice of the bridegroom and the voice
of the bride, the voice of those who will say:

"Praise the LORD of hosts,
For the LORD *is* good,
For His mercy *endures* forever"—

and of those *who will* bring the sacrifice of
praise into the house of the LORD. For I will
cause the captives of the land to return as
at the first,' says the LORD.

12"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In this
place which is desolate, without man and
without beast, and in all its cities, there
shall again be a dwelling place of shep-
herds causing *their* flocks to lie down. 13In
the cities of the mountains, in the cities of
the lowland, in the cities of the South, in
the land of Benjamin, in the places around
Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the
flocks shall again pass under the hands of
him who counts *them,*' says the LORD.

14'Behold, the days are coming,' says the
LORD, 'that I will perform that good thing
which I have promised to the house of
Israel and to the house of Judah:

15 'In those days and at that time



ROBERTA CROTEAU • Editor of *Homecoming Magazine*, Author

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know. | JEREMIAH 33:3

"Prayer changes things" is a message seen on everything from needlepoint pillows to bumper stickers, bookmarks, and t-shirts. I'm not sure we've ever really stopped to think about it, though. Does praying something really make it so? And would we really want to believe in a God who worked that way? Sure, you might know the best things to ask for and the right way to do it, but what about the guy next to you whose requests may very well screw up your own?

It's like praying for your team to win the Super Bowl. It's the ultimate divine showdown. Both teams prayed for the trophy. Which one did God decide prayed harder? Or better? Or with more fans in a sheer numbers game? It's ludicrous. And yet we still, with hearts pure and true, pour out our requests to God and wonder why He doesn't seem to answer.

I will cause to grow up to David
A Branch of righteousness;
He shall execute judgment and
righteousness in the earth.
16 In those days Judah will be saved,
And Jerusalem will dwell safely.
And this *is the name* by which she will
be called:

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'[a]

17 "For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; 18 nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.'"

The Permanence of God's Covenant

19 And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 20 "Thus says the LORD: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, 21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.'"

23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 24 "Have you not considered what these people have spoken, saying, 'The two families which the LORD has chosen, He has also cast them off'? Thus they have despised My people, as if they should no more be a nation before them.

25 "Thus says the LORD: 'If My covenant *is* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, 26 then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, *so* that I will not take *any* of his descendants *to be* rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause

33:16 [a]Compare 23:5, 6

When Jesus said, "This is how you should pray," He was letting us in on one of the secrets. It's not a shopping list; it's a conversation. He's not Santa Claus; He's your Father. God knows what you want before you ask. You're not letting Him in on anything new. He knows you need that job, that you want the test to come back negative, that you hope the check somehow won't bounce. I even believe He cares enough to walk you through the most minor of your day's concerns.

What counts is that He hears from you—and that you're willing to call. And He asks you to listen. The trick is learning to listen and hear the answer He wants, not the one you do. "If you begin to live life looking for the God that is all around you," writes Frank Bianco, "every moment becomes a prayer."

There's the hardest lesson of all. Just like the little children we were and the little children we still are, it's so much easier even not to just ask and ask and ask—and sometimes to beg and beg and beg for everything we want. As our Father, He will sit and patiently hear us out—but as He's tried so many times to teach us and to show us, all He really wants to hear is our voice. He just asks that we begin that conversation with Him, that intimate, loving, trusting, tender kind of dialogue usually reserved for lovers or children—and that the conversation should never end.

their captives to return, and will have mercy on them.'"

Zedekiah Warned by God

34 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army, all the kingdoms of the earth under his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem and all its cities, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. 3And you shall not escape from his hand, but shall surely be taken and delivered into his hand; your eyes shall see the eyes of the king of Babylon, he shall speak with you face to face,[a] and you shall go to Babylon.'" ' 4Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah! Thus says the LORD concerning you: 'You shall not die by the sword. 5You shall die in peace; as in the ceremonies of your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so they shall burn *incense* for you and lament for you, *saying,* "Alas, lord!" For I have pronounced the word, says the LORD.'"

6Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, 7when the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish and Azekah; for *only* these fortified cities remained of the cities of Judah.

Treacherous Treatment of Slaves

8*This is* the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who *were* at Jerusalem to proclaim liberty to them: 9that every man should set free his male and female slave—a Hebrew man or woman—that no one should keep a Jewish brother in bondage. 10Now when all the princes and all the people, who had entered into the covenant, heard that everyone should set free his male and female slaves, that no one should keep them in bondage anymore, they obeyed and let *them* go. 11But afterward they changed their minds and made the male and female slaves return, whom they had set free, and brought them into subjection as male and female slaves.

12Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 13"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, 14"At the end of seven years let every man set free his Hebrew brother, who has been sold to him; and when he has served you six years, you shall let him go free from you." But your fathers did not obey Me nor incline their ear. 15Then you recently turned and did what was right in My sight—every man proclaiming liberty to his neighbor; and you made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name. 16Then you turned around and profaned My name, and every one of you brought back his male and female slaves, whom you had set at liberty, at their pleasure, and brought them back into subjection, to be your male and female slaves.'

17"Therefore thus says the LORD: 'You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every one to his neighbor. Behold, I proclaim liberty to you,' says the LORD—'to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine! And I will deliver you to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth. 18And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between the parts of it— 19the princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf— 20I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. Their dead bodies shall be for meat for the birds of the heaven and the beasts of the earth. 21And I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army which has gone back from you. 22Behold, I will command,' says the LORD, 'and cause them to return to this city. They will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant.'"

34:3 [a]Literally *mouth to mouth*

The Obedient Rechabites

35 The word which came to Jeremiah
from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying,
2 "Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak
to them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and
give them wine to drink."

3 Then I took Jaazaniah the son of
Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, his brothers and all his sons, and the whole house of
the Rechabites, 4 and I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber
of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which *was* by the chamber of
the princes, above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door.
5 Then I set before the sons of the house of
the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups;
and I said to them, "Drink wine."

6 But they said, "We will drink no wine,
for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, 'You shall drink
no wine, you nor your sons, forever. 7 You
shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have *any of these;* but all your
days you shall dwell in tents, that you may
live many days in the land where you are
sojourners.' 8 Thus we have obeyed the
voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink
no wine all our days, we, our wives, our
sons, or our daughters, 9 nor to build ourselves houses to dwell in; nor do we have
vineyard, field, or seed. 10 But we have
dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab our father
commanded us. 11 But it came to pass, when
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, 'Come, let us
go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the
Chaldeans and for fear of the army of the
Syrians.' So we dwell at Jerusalem."

12 Then came the word of the LORD to
Jeremiah, saying, 13 "Thus says the LORD
of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Go and tell
the men of Judah and the inhabitants of
Jerusalem, "Will you not receive instruction to obey My words?" says the LORD.
14 "The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab,
which he commanded his sons, not to drink
wine, are performed; for to this day they drink none, and obey their father's commandment. But although I have spoken to
you, rising early and speaking, you did not
obey Me. 15 I have also sent to you all My
servants the prophets, rising up early and
sending *them,* saying, 'Turn now everyone
from his evil way, amend your doings, and
do not go after other gods to serve them;
then you will dwell in the land which I
have given you and your fathers.' But you
have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed
Me. 16 Surely the sons of Jonadab the son
of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded
them, but this people has not obeyed Me." '

17 "Therefore thus says the LORD God
of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will
bring on Judah and on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the doom that I have
pronounced against them; because I have
spoken to them but they have not heard,
and I have called to them but they have
not answered.'"

18 And Jeremiah said to the house of
the Rechabites, "Thus says the LORD of
hosts, the God of Israel: 'Because you have
obeyed the commandment of Jonadab
your father, and kept all his precepts and
done according to all that he commanded
you, 19 therefore thus says the LORD of
hosts, the God of Israel: "Jonadab the son
of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand
before Me forever." '"

The Scroll Read in the Temple

36 Now it came to pass in the fourth
year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, *that* this word came to
Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Take a
scroll of a book and write on it all the words
that I have spoken to you against Israel,
against Judah, and against all the nations,
from the day I spoke to you, from the days of
Josiah even to this day. 3 It may be that the
house of Judah will hear all the adversities
which I purpose to bring upon them, that
everyone may turn from his evil way, that I
may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son
of Neriah; and Baruch wrote on a scroll of
a book, at the instruction of Jeremiah,[a] all
the words of the LORD which He had spoken

36:4 [a]Literally *from Jeremiah's mouth*

to him. 5And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, "I *am* confined, I cannot go into the house of the LORD. 6You go, therefore, and read from the scroll which you have written at my instruction,[a] the words of the LORD, in the hearing of the people in the LORD's house on the day of fasting. And you shall also read them in the hearing of all Judah who come from their cities. 7It may be that they will present their supplication before the LORD, and everyone will turn from his evil way. For great *is* the anger and the fury that the LORD has pronounced against this people." 8And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading from the book the words of the LORD in the LORD's house.

9Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, *that* they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. 10Then Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper court at the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house, in the hearing of all the people.

The Scroll Read in the Palace

11When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the book, 12he then went down to the king's house, into the scribe's chamber; and there all the princes were sitting—Elishama the scribe, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. 13Then Michaiah declared to them all the words that he had heard when Baruch read the book in the hearing of the people. 14Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to Baruch, saying, "Take in your hand the scroll from which you have read in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. 15And they said to him, "Sit down now, and read it in our hearing." So Baruch read *it* in their hearing.

16Now it happened, when they had heard all the words, that they looked in fear from one to another, and said to Baruch, "We will surely tell the king of all these words." 17And they asked Baruch, saying, "Tell us now, how did you write all these words—at his instruction?"[a]

18So Baruch answered them, "He proclaimed with his mouth all these words to me, and I wrote *them* with ink in the book."

19Then the princes said to Baruch, "Go and hide, you and Jeremiah; and let no one know where you are."

The King Destroys Jeremiah's Scroll

20And they went to the king, into the court; but they stored the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the hearing of the king. 21So the king sent Jehudi to bring the scroll, and he took it from Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the hearing of the king and in the hearing of all the princes who stood beside the king. 22Now the king was sitting in the winter house in the ninth month, with *a fire* burning on the hearth before him. 23And it happened, when Jehudi had read three or four columns, *that the king* cut it with the scribe's knife and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth. 24Yet they were not afraid, nor did they tear their garments, the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words. 25Nevertheless Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah implored the king not to burn the scroll; but he would not listen to them. 26And the king commanded Jerahmeel the king's[a] son, Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them.

Jeremiah Rewrites the Scroll

27Now after the king had burned the scroll with the words which Baruch had written at the instruction of Jeremiah,[a] the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: 28"Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. 29And you shall say

36:6 [a]Literally *from my mouth* **36:17** [a]Literally *with his mouth*
36:26 [a]Hebrew *Hammelech* **36:27** [a]Literally *from Jeremiah's mouth*

to Jehoiakim king of Judah, 'Thus says the LORD: "You have burned this scroll, saying, 'Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and cause man and beast to cease from here?'" 30Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: "He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. 31I will punish him, his family, and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring on them, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah all the doom that I have pronounced against them; but they did not heed." '"

32Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the instruction of Jeremiah[a] all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And besides, there were added to them many similar words.

Zedekiah's Vain Hope

37 Now King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. 2But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land gave heed to the words of the LORD which He spoke by the prophet Jeremiah.

3And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "Pray now to the LORD our God for us." 4Now Jeremiah was coming and going among the people, for they had not *yet* put him in prison. 5Then Pharaoh's army came up from Egypt; and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

6Then the word of the LORD came to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 7"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Thus you shall say to the king of Judah, who sent you to Me to inquire of Me: "Behold, Pharaoh's army which has come up to help you will return to Egypt, to their own land. 8And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire." ' 9Thus says the LORD: 'Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans will surely depart from us," for they will not depart. 10For though you had defeated the whole army of the Chaldeans who fight against you, and there remained *only* wounded men among them, they would rise up, every man in his tent, and burn the city with fire.'"

Jeremiah Imprisoned

11And it happened, when the army of the Chaldeans left *the siege* of Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, 12that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to claim his property there among the people. 13And when he was in the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard *was* there whose name *was* Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are defecting to the Chaldeans!"

14Then Jeremiah said, "False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans." But he did not listen to him.

So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes. 15Therefore the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe. For they had made that the prison.

16When Jeremiah entered the dungeon and the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days, 17then Zedekiah the king sent and took him *out*. The king asked him secretly in his house, and said, "Is there *any* word from the LORD?"

And Jeremiah said, "There is." Then he said, "You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon!"

18Moreover Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "What offense have I committed against you, against your servants, or against this people, that you have put me in prison? 19Where now *are* your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, 'The king of Babylon will not come against you or against this land'? 20Therefore please hear now, O my lord the king. Please, let my petition be accepted before you, and do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there."

21Then Zedekiah the king commanded

36:32 [a]Literally *from Jeremiah's mouth*

that they should commit Jeremiah to the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread from the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city was gone. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Jeremiah in the Dungeon

38 Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, Jucal[a] the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchiah heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken to all the people, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD: 'He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.'[a] 3Thus says the LORD: 'This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.'"

4Therefore the princes said to the king, "Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm."

5Then Zedekiah the king said, "Look, he *is* in your hand. For the king can *do* nothing against you." 6So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king's[a] son, which *was* in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire.

7Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon. When the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin, 8Ebed-Melech went out of the king's house and spoke to the king, saying: 9"My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is. For *there is* no more bread in the city." 10Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take from here thirty men with you, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies." 11So Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took from there old clothes and old rags, and let them down by ropes into the dungeon to Jeremiah. 12Then Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Please put these old clothes and rags under your armpits, under the ropes." And Jeremiah did so. 13So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the dungeon. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Zedekiah's Fears and Jeremiah's Advice

14Then Zedekiah the king sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of the LORD. And the king said to Jeremiah, "I will ask you something. Hide nothing from me."

15Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I declare *it* to you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you advice, you will not listen to me."

16So Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, saying, "*As* the LORD lives, who made our very souls, I will not put you to death, nor will I give you into the hand of these men who seek your life."

17Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'If you surely surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. 18But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.'"

19And Zedekiah the king said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they abuse me."

20But Jeremiah said, "They shall not deliver *you*. Please, obey the voice of the LORD which I speak to you. So it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live. 21But if you refuse to surrender, this *is* the word that the LORD has shown me: 22'Now behold, all the women who are left in the king of Judah's house *shall be* surrendered to the king of Babylon's princes, and those *women* shall say:

38:1 [a]Same as *Jehucal* (compare 37:3) **38:2** [a]Compare 21:9
38:6 [a]Hebrew *Hammelech*

"Your close friends have set upon you
And prevailed against you;
Your feet have sunk in the mire,
And they have turned away again."

23 'So they shall surrender all your wives
and children to the Chaldeans. You shall not
escape from their hand, but shall be taken
by the hand of the king of Babylon. And you
shall cause this city to be burned with fire.'"
24 Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Let
no one know of these words, and you shall
not die. 25 But if the princes hear that I have
talked with you, and they come to you and
say to you, 'Declare to us now what you
have said to the king, and also what the
king said to you; do not hide *it* from us, and
we will not put you to death,' 26 then you
shall say to them, 'I presented my request
before the king, that he would not make me
return to Jonathan's house to die there.'"
27 Then all the princes came to Jeremiah
and asked him. And he told them accord-
ing to all these words that the king had
commanded. So they stopped speaking
with him, for the conversation had not
been heard. 28 Now Jeremiah remained in
the court of the prison until the day that
Jerusalem was taken. And he was *there*
when Jerusalem was taken.

The Fall of Jerusalem

39 In the ninth year of Zedekiah
king of Judah, in the tenth month,
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his
army came against Jerusalem, and besieged
it. 2 In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in
the fourth month, on the ninth *day* of the
month, the city was penetrated.
3 Then all the princes of the king of
Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate:
Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim,
Rabsaris,[a] Nergal-Sarezer, Rabmag,[b] with the
rest of the princes of the king of Babylon.
4 So it was, when Zedekiah the king of
Judah and all the men of war saw them,
that they fled and went out of the city by
night, by way of the king's garden, by the
gate between the two walls. And he went
out by way of the plain.[a] 5 But the Chaldean
army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah
in the plains of Jericho. And when they
had captured him, they brought him up
to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to
Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he
pronounced judgment on him. 6 Then the
king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah
before his eyes in Riblah; the king of
Babylon also killed all the nobles of Judah.
7 Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and
bound him with bronze fetters to carry him
off to Babylon. 8 And the Chaldeans burned
the king's house and the houses of the peo-
ple with fire, and broke down the walls of
Jerusalem. 9 Then Nebuzaradan the captain
of the guard carried away captive to Babylon
the remnant of the people who remained
in the city and those who defected to him,
with the rest of the people who remained.
10 But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard
left in the land of Judah the poor people,
who had nothing, and gave them vineyards
and fields at the same time.

Jeremiah Goes Free

11 Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon
gave charge concerning Jeremiah to
Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard,
saying, 12 "Take him and look after him, and
do him no harm; but do to him just as he
says to you." 13 So Nebuzaradan the captain
of the guard sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris,
Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king
of Babylon's chief officers; 14 then they
sent *someone* to take Jeremiah from the
court of the prison, and committed him
to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of
Shaphan, that he should take him home.
So he dwelt among the people.
15 Meanwhile the word of the LORD had
come to Jeremiah while he was shut up in
the court of the prison, saying, 16 "Go and
speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, say-
ing, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God
of Israel: "Behold, I will bring My words
upon this city for adversity and not for
good, and they shall be *performed* in that
day before you. 17 But I will deliver you in
that day," says the LORD, "and you shall
not be given into the hand of the men
of whom you *are* afraid. 18 For I will surely
deliver you, and you shall not fall by the
sword; but your life shall be as a prize to

39:3 [a]A title, probably *Chief Officer;* also verse 13 [b]A title, probably *Troop Commander;* also verse 13 **39:4** [a]Or *the Arabah,* that is, the Jordan Valley

you, because you have put your trust in Me," says the LORD.'"

Jeremiah with Gedaliah the Governor

40 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all who were carried away captive from Jerusalem and Judah, who were carried away captive to Babylon.

2 And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him: "The LORD your God has pronounced this doom on this place. 3 Now the LORD has brought *it,* and has done just as He said. Because you *people* have sinned against the LORD, and not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you. 4 And now look, I free you this day from the chains that *were* on your hand. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you. But if it seems wrong for you to come with me to Babylon, remain here. See, all the land *is* before you; wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go, go there."

5 Now while Jeremiah had not yet gone back, *Nebuzaradan said,* "Go back to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people. Or go wherever it seems convenient for you to go." So the captain of the guard gave him rations and a gift and let him go. 6 Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people who were left in the land.

7 And when all the captains of the armies who *were* in the fields, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed to him men, women, children, and the poorest of the land who had not been carried away captive to Babylon, 8 then they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah[a] the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. 9 And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took an oath before them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. 10 As for me, I will indeed dwell at Mizpah and serve the Chaldeans who come to us. But you, gather wine and summer fruit and oil, put *them* in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that you have taken." 11 Likewise, when all the Jews who *were* in Moab, among the Ammonites, in Edom, and who *were* in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, 12 then all the Jews returned out of all places where they had been driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruit in abundance.

13 Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that *were* in the fields came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, 14 and said to him, "Do you certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to murder you?" But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam did not believe them.

15 Then Johanan the son of Kareah spoke secretly to Gedaliah in Mizpah, saying, "Let me go, please, and I will kill Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no one will know *it.* Why should he murder you, so that all the Jews who are gathered to you would be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?"

16 But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said to Johanan the son of Kareah, "You shall not do this thing, for you speak falsely concerning Ishmael."

Insurrection Against Gedaliah

41 Now it came to pass in the seventh month *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family and of the officers of the king, came with ten men to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. And there they ate bread together in Mizpah. 2 Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men who were with him, arose and struck Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, and killed him whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. 3 Ishmael also struck down all the Jews who

40:8 [a]Spelled *Jaazaniah* in 2 Kings 25:23

God is to be praised with the voice, and the heart should go therewith in holy exultation.
CHARLES SPURGEON

were with him, *that is,* with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war.

4 And it happened, on the second day after he had killed Gedaliah, when as yet no one knew *it,* 5 that certain men came from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, eighty men with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring *them* to the house of the LORD. 6 Now Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went along; and it happened as he met them that he said to them, "Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam!" 7 So it was, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah killed them *and cast them* into the midst of a pit, he and the men who were with him. 8 But ten men were found among them who said to Ishmael, "Do not kill us, for we have treasures of wheat, barley, oil, and honey in the field." So he desisted and did not kill them among their brethren. 9 Now the pit into which Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men whom he had slain, because of Gedaliah, *was* the same one Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *the* slain. 10 Then Ishmael carried away captive all the rest of the people who *were* in Mizpah, the king's daughters and all the people who remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

11 But when Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done, 12 they took all the men and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah; and they found him by the great pool that *is* in Gibeon. 13 So it was, when all the people who *were* with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces who *were* with him, that they were glad. 14 Then all the people whom Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah turned around and came back, and went to Johanan the son of Kareah. 15 But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men and went to the Ammonites.

16 Then Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, took from Mizpah all the rest of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah after he had murdered Gedaliah the son of Ahikam—the mighty men of war and the women and the children and the eunuchs, whom he had brought back from Gibeon. 17 And they departed and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is near Bethlehem, as they went on their way to Egypt, 18 because of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had murdered Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had made governor in the land.

The Flight to Egypt Forbidden

42 Now all the captains of the forces, Johanan the son of Kareah, Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people, from the least to the greatest, came near 2 and said to Jeremiah the prophet, "Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the LORD your God, for all this remnant (since we are left *but* a few of many, as you can see), 3 that the LORD your God may show us the way in which we should walk and the thing we should do."

4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, "I have heard. Indeed, I will pray to the LORD your God according to your words, and it shall be, *that* whatever the LORD answers you, I will declare *it* to you. I will keep nothing back from you."

5 So they said to Jeremiah, "Let the LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the LORD your God sends us by you. 6 Whether *it is* pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we send you, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God."

7 And it happened after ten days that the
word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. 8 Then
he called Johanan the son of Kareah, all the
captains of the forces which *were* with him,
and all the people from the least even to the
greatest, 9 and said to them, "Thus says the
LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent
me to present your petition before Him:
10 'If you will still remain in this land, then
I will build you and not pull *you* down, and
I will plant you and not pluck *you* up. For I
relent concerning the disaster that I have
brought upon you. 11 Do not be afraid of the
king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do
not be afraid of him,' says the LORD, 'for I *am*
with you, to save you and deliver you from
his hand. 12 And I will show you mercy, that
he may have mercy on you and cause you to
return to your own land.'

13 "But if you say, 'We will not dwell in this
land,' disobeying the voice of the LORD your
God, 14 saying, 'No, but we will go to the land
of Egypt where we shall see no war, nor hear
the sound of the trumpet, nor be hungry
for bread, and there we will dwell'— 15 Then
hear now the word of the LORD, O remnant
of Judah! Thus says the LORD of hosts, the
God of Israel: 'If you wholly set your faces
to enter Egypt, and go to dwell there, 16 then
it shall be *that* the sword which you feared
shall overtake you there in the land of
Egypt; the famine of which you were afraid
shall follow close after you there *in* Egypt;
and there you shall die. 17 So shall it be with
all the men who set their faces to go to
Egypt to dwell there. They shall die by the
sword, by famine, and by pestilence. And
none of them shall remain or escape from
the disaster that I will bring upon them.'

18 "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the
God of Israel: 'As My anger and My fury
have been poured out on the inhabitants
of Jerusalem, so will My fury be poured
out on you when you enter Egypt. And
you shall be an oath, an astonishment, a
curse, and a reproach; and you shall see
this place no more.'

19 "The LORD has said concerning you,
O remnant of Judah, 'Do not go to Egypt!'
Know certainly that I have admonished
you this day. 20 For you were hypocrites in
your hearts when you sent me to the LORD
your God, saying, 'Pray for us to the LORD
our God, and according to all that the LORD
your God says, so declare to us and we will
do *it*.' 21 And I have this day declared *it* to
you, but you have not obeyed the voice of
the LORD your God, or anything which He
has sent you by me. 22 Now therefore, know
certainly that you shall die by the sword,
by famine, and by pestilence in the place
where you desire to go to dwell."

Jeremiah Taken to Egypt

43 Now it happened, when Jeremiah
had stopped speaking to all the peo-
ple all the words of the LORD their God, for
which the LORD their God had sent him to
them, all these words, 2 that Azariah the son
of Hoshaiah, Johanan the son of Kareah,
and all the proud men spoke, saying to
Jeremiah, "You speak falsely! The LORD our
God has not sent you to say, 'Do not go to
Egypt to dwell there.' 3 But Baruch the son
of Neriah has set you against us, to deliver
us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that
they may put us to death or carry us away
captive to Babylon." 4 So Johanan the son of
Kareah, all the captains of the forces, and
all the people would not obey the voice of
the LORD, to remain in the land of Judah.
5 But Johanan the son of Kareah and all
the captains of the forces took all the rem-
nant of Judah who had returned to dwell in
the land of Judah, from all nations where
they had been driven— 6 men, women,
children, the king's daughters, and every
person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of
the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of
Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah
the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah.
7 So they went to the land of Egypt, for they
did not obey the voice of the LORD. And
they went as far as Tahpanhes.

8 Then the word of the LORD came to
Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, 9 "Take large
stones in your hand, and hide them in the
sight of the men of Judah, in the clay in the
brick courtyard which *is* at the entrance to
Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes; 10 and say
to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the
God of Israel: "Behold, I will send and bring
Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My
servant, and will set his throne above these
stones that I have hidden. And he will
spread his royal pavilion over them. 11 When

he comes, he shall strike the land of Egypt *and deliver* to death *those appointed* for death, and to captivity *those appointed* for captivity, and to the sword *those appointed* for the sword. 12I[a] will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them away captive. And he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd puts on his garment, and he shall go out from there in peace. 13He shall also break the *sacred* pillars of Beth Shemesh[a] that *are* in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians he shall burn with fire." '"

Israelites Will Be Punished in Egypt

44 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who dwell in the land of Egypt, who dwell at Migdol, at Tahpanhes, at Noph,[a] and in the country of Pathros, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'You have seen all the calamity that I have brought on Jerusalem and on all the cities of Judah; and behold, this day they *are* a desolation, and no one dwells in them, 3because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke Me to anger, in that they went to burn incense *and* to serve other gods whom they did not know, they nor you nor your fathers. 4However I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them,* saying, "Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!" 5But they did not listen or incline their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense to other gods. 6So My fury and My anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted *and* desolate, as it is this day.'

7"Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Why do you commit *this* great evil against yourselves, to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant, out of Judah, leaving none to remain, 8in that you provoke Me to wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to dwell, that you may cut yourselves off and be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? 9Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, the wickedness of the kings of Judah, the wickedness of their wives, your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10They have not been humbled, to this day, nor have they feared; they have not walked in My law or in My statutes that I set before you and your fathers.'

11"Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will set My face against you for catastrophe and for cutting off all Judah. 12And I will take the remnant of Judah who have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to dwell there, and they shall all be consumed *and* fall in the land of Egypt. They shall be consumed by the sword *and* by famine. They shall die, from the least to the greatest, by the sword and by famine; and they shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse and a reproach! 13For I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, 14so that none of the remnant of Judah who have gone into the land of Egypt to dwell there shall escape or survive, lest they return to the land of Judah, to which they desire to return and dwell. For none shall return except those who escape.'"

15Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense to other gods, with all the women who stood by, a great multitude, and all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying: 16"*As for* the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you! 17But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For *then* we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble. 18But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine."

19*The women also said,* "And when we

43:12 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *He*. **43:13** [a]Literally *House of the Sun*, ancient On; later called Heliopolis **44:1** [a]That is, ancient Memphis

burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make cakes for her, to worship her, and pour out drink offerings to her without our husbands' *permission?*"

20Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people—the men, the women, and all the people who had given him *that* answer—saying: 21"The incense that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and did it *not* come into His mind? 22So the LORD could no longer bear *it,* because of the evil of your doings *and* because of the abominations which you committed. Therefore your land is a desolation, an astonishment, a curse, and without an inhabitant, as *it is* this day. 23Because you have burned incense and because you have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD or walked in His law, in His statutes or in His testimonies, therefore this calamity has happened to you, as *at* this day."

24Moreover Jeremiah said to all the people and to all the women, "Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah who *are* in the land of Egypt! 25Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: 'You and your wives have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled with your hands, saying, "We will surely keep our vows that we have made, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her." You will surely keep your vows and perform your vows!' 26Therefore hear the word of the LORD, all Judah who dwell in the land of Egypt: 'Behold, I have sworn by My great name,' says the LORD, 'that My name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, "The Lord GOD lives." 27Behold, I will watch over them for adversity and not for good. And all the men of Judah who *are* in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end to them. 28Yet a small number who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah; and all the remnant of Judah, who have gone to the land of Egypt to dwell there, shall know whose words will stand, Mine or theirs. 29And this *shall be* a sign to you,' says the LORD, 'that I will punish you in this place, that you may know that My words will surely stand against you for adversity.'

30"Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life.'"

Assurance to Baruch

45 The word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the instruction of Jeremiah,[a] in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: 3'You said, "Woe is me now! For the LORD has added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest." '

4"Thus you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, what I have built I will break down, and what I have planted I will pluck up, that is, this whole land. 5And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek *them;* for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh," says the LORD. "But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go." '"

Judgment on Egypt

46 The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the nations. 2Against Egypt.

Concerning the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, which was by the River Euphrates in Carchemish, and which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

3 "Order the buckler and shield,
And draw near to battle!
4 Harness the horses,
And mount up, you horsemen!
Stand forth with *your* helmets,
Polish the spears,
Put on the armor!
5 Why have I seen them dismayed *and*
turned back?
Their mighty ones are beaten down;
They have speedily fled,

45:1 [a]Literally *from Jeremiah's mouth*

And did not look back,
For fear *was* all around," says the LORD.
6 "Do not let the swift flee away,
Nor the mighty man escape;
They will stumble and fall
Toward the north, by the River
Euphrates.

7 "Who *is* this coming up like a flood,
Whose waters move like the rivers?
8 Egypt rises up like a flood,
And *its* waters move like the rivers;
And he says, 'I will go up *and* cover the
earth,
I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.'
9 Come up, O horses, and rage, O chariots!
And let the mighty men come forth:
The Ethiopians and the Libyans who
handle the shield,
And the Lydians who handle *and* bend
the bow.
10 For this *is* the day of the Lord GOD of
hosts,
A day of vengeance,
That He may avenge Himself on His
adversaries.
The sword shall devour;
It shall be satiated and made drunk
with their blood;
For the Lord GOD of hosts has a
sacrifice
In the north country by the River
Euphrates.

11 "Go up to Gilead and take balm,
O virgin, the daughter of Egypt;
In vain you will use many medicines;
You shall not be cured.
12 The nations have heard of your shame,
And your cry has filled the land;
For the mighty man has stumbled
against the mighty;
They both have fallen together."

Babylonia Will Strike Egypt

13 The word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon would come *and* strike the land of Egypt.

14 "Declare in Egypt, and proclaim
in Migdol;
Proclaim in Noph[a] and in Tahpanhes;
Say, 'Stand fast and prepare yourselves,
For the sword devours all around you.'
15 Why are your valiant *men* swept away?
They did not stand
Because the LORD drove them away.
16 He made many fall;
Yes, one fell upon another.
And they said, 'Arise!
Let us go back to our own people
And to the land of our nativity
From the oppressing sword.'
17 They cried there,
'Pharaoh, king of Egypt, *is but* a noise.
He has passed by the appointed time!'

18 "*As* I live," says the King,
Whose name *is* the LORD of hosts,
"Surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains
And as Carmel by the sea, *so* he shall
come.
19 O you daughter dwelling in Egypt,
Prepare yourself to go into captivity!
For Noph[a] shall be waste and desolate,
without inhabitant.

20 "Egypt *is* a very pretty heifer,
But destruction comes, it comes from
the north.
21 Also her mercenaries are in her midst
like fat bulls,
For they also are turned back,
They have fled away together.
They did not stand,
For the day of their calamity had come
upon them,
The time of their punishment.
22 Her noise shall go like a serpent,
For they shall march with an army
And come against her with axes,
Like those who chop wood.

23 "They shall cut down her forest," says
the LORD,
"Though it cannot be searched,
Because they *are* innumerable,
And more numerous than grasshoppers.
24 The daughter of Egypt shall be ashamed;
She shall be delivered into the hand
Of the people of the north."

25 The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, says: "Behold, I will bring punishment on

46:14 [a]That is, ancient Memphis **46:19** [a]That is, ancient Memphis

Amon[a] of No,[b] and Pharaoh and Egypt, with their gods and their kings—Pharaoh and those who trust in him. 26And I will deliver them into the hand of those who seek their lives, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of his servants. Afterward it shall be inhabited as in the days of old," says the LORD.

God Will Preserve Israel

27 "But do not fear, O My servant Jacob,
And do not be dismayed, O Israel!
For behold, I will save you from afar,
And your offspring from the land of their captivity;
Jacob shall return, have rest and be at ease;
No one shall make *him* afraid.
28 Do not fear, O Jacob My servant," says the LORD,
"For I *am* with you;
For I will make a complete end of all the nations
To which I have driven you,
But I will not make a complete end of you.
I will rightly correct you,
For I will not leave you wholly unpunished."

Judgment on Philistia

47 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before Pharaoh attacked Gaza.
2Thus says the LORD:

"Behold, waters rise out of the north,
And shall be an overflowing flood;
They shall overflow the land and all that is in it,
The city and those who dwell within;
Then the men shall cry,
And all the inhabitants of the land shall wail.
3 At the noise of the stamping hooves of his strong horses,
At the rushing of his chariots,
At the rumbling of his wheels,
The fathers will not look back for *their* children,
Lacking courage,
4 Because of the day that comes to plunder all the Philistines,
To cut off from Tyre and Sidon every helper who remains;
For the LORD shall plunder the Philistines,
The remnant of the country of Caphtor.
5 Baldness has come upon Gaza,
Ashkelon is cut off
With the remnant of their valley.
How long will you cut yourself?

6 "O you sword of the LORD,
How long until you are quiet?
Put yourself up into your scabbard,
Rest and be still!
7 How can it be quiet,
Seeing the LORD has given it a charge
Against Ashkelon and against the seashore?
There He has appointed it."

Judgment on Moab

48 Against Moab.
Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

"Woe to Nebo!
For it is plundered,
Kirjathaim is shamed *and* taken;
The high stronghold[a] is shamed and dismayed—
2 No more praise of Moab.
In Heshbon they have devised evil against her:
'Come, and let us cut her off as a nation.'
You also shall be cut down, O Madmen![a]
The sword shall pursue you;
3 A voice of crying *shall be* from Horonaim:
'Plundering and great destruction!'

4 "Moab is destroyed;
Her little ones have caused a cry to be heard;[a]
5 For in the Ascent of Luhith they ascend with continual weeping;
For in the descent of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.

6 "Flee, save your lives!
And be like the juniper[a] in the wilderness.

46:25 [a]A sun god [b]That is, ancient Thebes **48:1** [a]Hebrew *Misgab* **48:2** [a]A city of Moab **48:4** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Proclaim it in Zoar*. **48:6** [a]Or *Aroer,* a city of Moab

7 For because you have trusted in your
works and your treasures,
You also shall be taken.
And Chemosh shall go forth into
captivity,
His priests and his princes together.
8 And the plunderer shall come against
every city;
No one shall escape.
The valley also shall perish,
And the plain shall be destroyed,
As the LORD has spoken.

9 "Give wings to Moab,
That she may flee and get away;
For her cities shall be desolate,
Without any to dwell in them.
10 Cursed *is* he who does the work of the
LORD deceitfully,
And cursed *is* he who keeps back his
sword from blood.

11 "Moab has been at ease from his[a] youth;
He has settled on his dregs,
And has not been emptied from vessel
to vessel,
Nor has he gone into captivity.
Therefore his taste remained in him,
And his scent has not changed.

12 "Therefore behold, the days are
coming," says the LORD,
"That I shall send him wine-workers
Who will tip him over
And empty his vessels
And break the bottles.
13 Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh,
As the house of Israel was ashamed of
Bethel, their confidence.

14 "How can you say, 'We *are* mighty
And strong men for the war'?
15 Moab is plundered and gone up *from*
her cities;
Her chosen young men have gone
down to the slaughter," says
the King,
Whose name *is* the LORD of hosts.

16 "The calamity of Moab *is* near at hand,
And his affliction comes quickly.
17 Bemoan him, all you who are around
him;
And all you who know his name,
Say, 'How the strong staff is broken,
The beautiful rod!'

18 "O daughter inhabiting Dibon,
Come down from *your* glory,
And sit in thirst;
For the plunderer of Moab has come
against you,
He has destroyed your strongholds.
19 O inhabitant of Aroer,
Stand by the way and watch;
Ask him who flees
And her who escapes;
Say, 'What has happened?'
20 Moab is shamed, for he is broken down.
Wail and cry!
Tell it in Arnon, that Moab is plundered.

21 "And judgment has come on the plain
country:
On Holon and Jahzah and Mephaath,
22 On Dibon and Nebo and Beth
Diblathaim,
23 On Kirjathaim and Beth Gamul and
Beth Meon,
24 On Kerioth and Bozrah,
On all the cities of the land of Moab,
Far or near.
25 The horn of Moab is cut off,
And his arm is broken," says the LORD.

26 "Make him drunk,
Because he exalted *himself* against the
LORD.
Moab shall wallow in his vomit,
And he shall also be in derision.
27 For was not Israel a derision to you?
Was he found among thieves?
For whenever you speak of him,
You shake *your head in scorn.*
28 You who dwell in Moab,
Leave the cities and dwell in the rock,
And be like the dove *which* makes her
nest
In the sides of the cave's mouth.

29 "We have heard the pride of Moab
(He *is* exceedingly proud),
Of his loftiness and arrogance and pride,
And of the haughtiness of his heart."

30 "I know his wrath," says the LORD,

48:11 [a]The Hebrew uses masculine and feminine pronouns interchangeably in this chapter.

"But it *is* not right;
His lies have made nothing right.
31 Therefore I will wail for Moab,
And I will cry out for all Moab;
I[a] will mourn for the men of Kir Heres.
32 O vine of Sibmah! I will weep for you
with the weeping of Jazer.
Your plants have gone over the sea,
They reach to the sea of Jazer.
The plunderer has fallen on your
summer fruit and your vintage.
33 Joy and gladness are taken
From the plentiful field
And from the land of Moab;
I have caused wine to fail from the
winepresses;
No one will tread with joyous
shouting—
Not joyous shouting!

34 "From the cry of Heshbon to Elealeh
and to Jahaz
They have uttered their voice,
From Zoar to Horonaim,
Like a three-year-old heifer;[a]
For the waters of Nimrim also shall be
desolate.

35 "Moreover," says the LORD,
"I will cause to cease in Moab
The one who offers *sacrifices* in the
high places
And burns incense to his gods.
36 Therefore My heart shall wail like
flutes for Moab,
And like flutes My heart shall wail
For the men of Kir Heres.
Therefore the riches they have
acquired have perished.

37 "For every head *shall be* bald, and every
beard clipped;
On all the hands *shall be* cuts, and on
the loins sackcloth—
38 A general lamentation
On all the housetops of Moab,
And in its streets;
For I have broken Moab like a vessel in
which *is* no pleasure," says the LORD.
39 "They shall wail:
'How she is broken down!
How Moab has turned her back
with shame!'
So Moab shall be a derision
And a dismay to all those about her."

40 For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, one shall fly like an eagle,
And spread his wings over Moab.
41 Kerioth is taken,
And the strongholds are surprised;
The mighty men's hearts in Moab on
that day shall be
Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.
42 And Moab shall be destroyed as a people,
Because he exalted *himself* against the
LORD.
43 Fear and the pit and the snare *shall be*
upon you,
O inhabitant of Moab," says the LORD.
44 "He who flees from the fear shall fall
into the pit,
And he who gets out of the pit shall be
caught in the snare.
For upon Moab, upon it I will bring
The year of their punishment," says
the LORD.

45 "Those who fled stood under the
shadow of Heshbon
Because of exhaustion.
But a fire shall come out of Heshbon,
A flame from the midst of Sihon,
And shall devour the brow of Moab,
The crown of the head of the sons of
tumult.
46 Woe to you, O Moab!
The people of Chemosh perish;
For your sons have been taken captive,
And your daughters captive.

47 "Yet I will bring back the captives of Moab
In the latter days," says the LORD.

Thus far *is* the judgment of Moab.

Judgment on Ammon

49 Against the Ammonites.
Thus says the LORD:

"Has Israel no sons?
Has he no heir?
Why *then* does Milcom[a] inherit Gad,

48:31 [a]Following Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *He*. **48:34** [a]Or *The Third Eglath*, an unknown city (compare Isaiah 15:5) **49:1** [a]Hebrew *Malcam*, literally *their king*, a god of the Ammonites; also called *Molech* (compare verse 3)

And his people dwell in its cities?
2 Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I will cause to be heard an alarm of war
In Rabbah of the Ammonites;
It shall be a desolate mound,
And her villages shall be burned with fire.
Then Israel shall take possession of his inheritance," says the LORD.

3 "Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is plundered!
Cry, you daughters of Rabbah,
Gird yourselves with sackcloth!
Lament and run to and fro by the walls;
For Milcom shall go into captivity
With his priests and his princes together.
4 Why do you boast in the valleys,
Your flowing valley, O backsliding daughter?
Who trusted in her treasures, *saying*,
'Who will come against me?'
5 Behold, I will bring fear upon you,"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts,
"From all those who are around you;
You shall be driven out, everyone headlong,
And no one will gather those who wander off.
6 But afterward I will bring back
The captives of the people of Ammon,"
says the LORD.

Judgment on Edom

7 Against Edom.
Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"*Is* wisdom no more in Teman?
Has counsel perished from the prudent?
Has their wisdom vanished?
8 Flee, turn back, dwell in the depths, O inhabitants of Dedan!
For I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him,
The time *that* I will punish him.
9 If grape-gatherers came to you,
Would they not leave *some* gleaning grapes?
If thieves by night,
Would they not destroy until they have enough?
10 But I have made Esau bare;
I have uncovered his secret places,[a]
And he shall not be able to hide himself.
His descendants are plundered,
His brethren and his neighbors,
And he *is* no more.
11 Leave your fatherless children,
I will preserve *them* alive;
And let your widows trust in Me."

12 For thus says the LORD: "Behold, those whose judgment *was* not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunk. And *are* you the one who will altogether go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, but you shall surely drink *of it*. 13 For I have sworn by Myself," says the LORD, "that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse. And all its cities shall be perpetual wastes."

14 I have heard a message from the LORD,
And an ambassador has been sent to the nations:
"Gather together, come against her,
And rise up to battle!

15 "For indeed, I will make you small among nations,
Despised among men.
16 Your fierceness has deceived you,
The pride of your heart,
O you who dwell in the clefts of the rock,
Who hold the height of the hill!
Though you make your nest as high as the eagle,
I will bring you down from there," says the LORD.[a]

49:10 [a]Compare Obadiah 5, 6 **49:16** [a]Compare Obadiah 3, 4



17 "Edom also shall be an astonishment;
Everyone who goes by it will be astonished
And will hiss at all its plagues.
18 As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah
And their neighbors," says the LORD,
"No one shall remain there,
Nor shall a son of man dwell in it.

19 "Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the floodplain[a] of the Jordan
Against the dwelling place of the strong;
But I will suddenly make him run away from her.
And who *is* a chosen *man that* I may appoint over her?
For who *is* like Me?
Who will arraign Me?
And who *is* that shepherd
Who will withstand Me?"

20 Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD that He has taken against Edom,
And His purposes that He has proposed against the inhabitants of Teman:
Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out;
Surely He shall make their dwelling places desolate with them.
21 The earth shakes at the noise of their fall;
At the cry its noise is heard at the Red Sea.
22 Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle,
And spread His wings over Bozrah;
The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be
Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.

Judgment on Damascus

23 Against Damascus.

"Hamath and Arpad are shamed,
For they have heard bad news.
They are fainthearted;
There is trouble on the sea;
It cannot be quiet.
24 Damascus has grown feeble;
She turns to flee,
And fear has seized *her.*
Anguish and sorrows have taken her like a woman in labor.
25 Why is the city of praise not deserted,
the city of My joy?
26 Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets,
And all the men of war shall be cut off in that day," says the LORD of hosts.
27 "I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus,
And it shall consume the palaces of Ben-Hadad."[a]

Judgment on Kedar and Hazor

28 Against Kedar and against the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon shall strike.
Thus says the LORD:

"Arise, go up to Kedar,
And devastate the men of the East!
29 Their tents and their flocks they shall take away.
They shall take for themselves their curtains,
All their vessels and their camels;
And they shall cry out to them,
'Fear *is* on every side!'

30 "Flee, get far away! Dwell in the depths,
O inhabitants of Hazor!" says the LORD.
"For Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has taken counsel against you,
And has conceived a plan against you.

31 "Arise, go up to the wealthy nation that dwells securely," says the LORD,
"Which has neither gates nor bars,
Dwelling alone.
32 Their camels shall be for booty,
And the multitude of their cattle for plunder.
I will scatter to all winds those in the farthest corners,
And I will bring their calamity from all its sides," says the LORD.
33 "Hazor shall be a dwelling for jackals, a desolation forever;
No one shall reside there,
Nor son of man dwell in it."

Judgment on Elam

34 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam, in the

49:19 [a]Or *thicket* **49:27** [a]Compare Amos 1:4

beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, 35 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Behold, I will break the bow of Elam,
The foremost of their might.
36 Against Elam I will bring the four winds
From the four quarters of heaven,
And scatter them toward all those winds;
There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.
37 For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies
And before those who seek their life.
I will bring disaster upon them,
My fierce anger,' says the LORD;
'And I will send the sword after them
Until I have consumed them.
38 I will set My throne in Elam,
And will destroy from there the king and the princes,' says the LORD.

39 'But it shall come to pass in the latter days:
I will bring back the captives of Elam,'
says the LORD."

Judgment on Babylon and Babylonia

50 The word that the LORD spoke against Babylon *and* against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

2 "Declare among the nations,
Proclaim, and set up a standard;
Proclaim—do not conceal *it*—
Say, 'Babylon is taken, Bel is shamed.
Merodach[a] is broken in pieces;
Her idols are humiliated,
Her images are broken in pieces.'
3 For out of the north a nation comes up against her,
Which shall make her land desolate,
And no one shall dwell therein.
They shall move, they shall depart,
Both man and beast.

4 "In those days and in that time," says the LORD,
"The children of Israel shall come,
They and the children of Judah together;
With continual weeping they shall come,
And seek the LORD their God.
5 They shall ask the way to Zion,
With their faces toward it, *saying*,
'Come and let us join ourselves to the LORD
In a perpetual covenant
That will not be forgotten.'

6 "My people have been lost sheep.
Their shepherds have led them astray;
They have turned them away *on* the mountains.
They have gone from mountain to hill;
They have forgotten their resting place.
7 All who found them have devoured them;
And their adversaries said, 'We have not offended,
Because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice,
The LORD, the hope of their fathers.'

8 "Move from the midst of Babylon,
Go out of the land of the Chaldeans;
And be like the rams before the flocks.
9 For behold, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon
An assembly of great nations from the north country,
And they shall array themselves against her;
From there she shall be captured.
Their arrows *shall be* like *those* of an expert warrior;[a]
None shall return in vain.
10 And Chaldea shall become plunder;
All who plunder her shall be satisfied," says the LORD.

11 "Because you were glad, because you rejoiced,
You destroyers of My heritage,
Because you have grown fat like a heifer threshing grain,
And you bellow like bulls,
12 Your mother shall be deeply ashamed;
She who bore you shall be ashamed.
Behold, the least of the nations *shall be* a wilderness,
A dry land and a desert.
13 Because of the wrath of the LORD
She shall not be inhabited,
But she shall be wholly desolate.

50:2 [a]A Babylonian god; sometimes spelled *Marduk* **50:9** [a]Following some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Syriac; Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate read *a warrior who makes childless.*

Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified
And hiss at all her plagues.

14 "Put yourselves in array against Babylon all around,
All you who bend the bow;
Shoot at her, spare no arrows,
For she has sinned against the LORD.
15 Shout against her all around;
She has given her hand,
Her foundations have fallen,
Her walls are thrown down;
For it *is* the vengeance of the LORD.
Take vengeance on her.
As she has done, so do to her.
16 Cut off the sower from Babylon,
And him who handles the sickle at harvest time.
For fear of the oppressing sword
Everyone shall turn to his own people,
And everyone shall flee to his own land.

17 "Israel *is* like scattered sheep;
The lions have driven *him* away.
First the king of Assyria devoured him;
Now at last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has broken his bones."

18 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

"Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land,
As I have punished the king of Assyria.
19 But I will bring back Israel to his home,
And he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan;
His soul shall be satisfied on Mount Ephraim and Gilead.
20 In those days and in that time," says the LORD,
"The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but *there shall be* none;
And the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found;
For I will pardon those whom I preserve.

21 "Go up against the land of Merathaim, against it,
And against the inhabitants of Pekod.
Waste and utterly destroy them," says the LORD,
"And do according to all that I have commanded you.
22 A sound of battle *is* in the land,
And of great destruction.
23 How the hammer of the whole earth has been cut apart and broken!
How Babylon has become a desolation among the nations!
24 I have laid a snare for you;
You have indeed been trapped, O Babylon,
And you were not aware;
You have been found and also caught,
Because you have contended against the LORD.
25 The LORD has opened His armory,
And has brought out the weapons of His indignation;
For this *is* the work of the Lord GOD of hosts
In the land of the Chaldeans.
26 Come against her from the farthest border;
Open her storehouses;
Cast her up as heaps of ruins,
And destroy her utterly;
Let nothing of her be left.
27 Slay all her bulls,
Let them go down to the slaughter.
Woe to them!
For their day has come, the time of their punishment.
28 The voice of those who flee and escape from the land of Babylon
Declares in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God,
The vengeance of His temple.

29 "Call together the archers against Babylon.
All you who bend the bow, encamp against it all around;
Let none of them escape.[a]
Repay her according to her work;
According to all she has done, do to her;
For she has been proud against the LORD,
Against the Holy One of Israel.
30 Therefore her young men shall fall in the streets,
And all her men of war shall be cut off in that day," says the LORD.

50:29 [a]Qere, some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Targum add *to her*.

31 "Behold, I *am* against you,
O most haughty one!" says the Lord
GOD of hosts;
"For your day has come,
The time *that* I will punish you.[a]
32 The most proud shall stumble and fall,
And no one will raise him up;
I will kindle a fire in his cities,
And it will devour all around him."

33 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"The children of Israel *were* oppressed,
Along with the children of Judah;
All who took them captive have held
them fast;
They have refused to let them go.
34 Their Redeemer *is* strong;
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.
He will thoroughly plead their case,
That He may give rest to the land,
And disquiet the inhabitants of
Babylon.

35 "A sword *is* against the Chaldeans," says
the LORD,
"Against the inhabitants of Babylon,
And against her princes and her wise
men.
36 A sword *is* against the soothsayers, and
they will be fools.
A sword *is* against her mighty men, and
they will be dismayed.
37 A sword *is* against their horses,
Against their chariots,
And against all the mixed peoples who
are in her midst;
And they will become like women.
A sword *is* against her treasures, and
they will be robbed.
38 A drought[a] *is* against her waters, and
they will be dried up.
For it *is* the land of carved images,
And they are insane with *their* idols.

39 "Therefore the wild desert beasts shall
dwell *there* with the jackals,
And the ostriches shall dwell in it.
It shall be inhabited no more forever,
Nor shall it be dwelt in from
generation to generation.
40 As God overthrew Sodom and
Gomorrah
And their neighbors," says the LORD,
"*So* no one shall reside there,
Nor son of man dwell in it.

41 "Behold, a people shall come from the
north,
And a great nation and many kings
Shall be raised up from the ends of the
earth.
42 They shall hold the bow and the lance;
They *are* cruel and shall not show mercy.
Their voice shall roar like the sea;
They shall ride on horses,
Set in array, like a man for the battle,
Against you, O daughter of Babylon.

43 "The king of Babylon has heard the
report about them,
And his hands grow feeble;
Anguish has taken hold of him,
Pangs as of a woman in childbirth.

44 "Behold, he shall come up like a lion
from the floodplain[a] of the Jordan
Against the dwelling place of the strong;
But I will make them suddenly run away
from her.
And who *is* a chosen *man that* I may
appoint over her?
For who *is* like Me?
Who will arraign Me?
And who *is* that shepherd
Who will withstand Me?"

45 Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD
that He has taken against Babylon,
And His purposes that He has
proposed against the land of the
Chaldeans:
Surely the least of the flock shall draw
them out;
Surely He will make their dwelling
place desolate with them.
46 At the noise of the taking of Babylon
The earth trembles,
And the cry is heard among the nations.

The Utter Destruction of Babylon

51 Thus says the LORD:
"Behold, I will raise up against Babylon,

50:31 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *The time of your punishment*. **50:38** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Syriac reads *sword;* Septuagint omits *A drought is*. **50:44** [a]Or *thicket*

Against those who dwell in Leb Kamai,[a]
A destroying wind.
2 And I will send winnowers to Babylon,
Who shall winnow her and empty her land.
For in the day of doom
They shall be against her all around.
3 Against *her* let the archer bend his bow,
And lift himself up against *her* in his armor.
Do not spare her young men;
Utterly destroy all her army.
4 Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans,
And *those* thrust through in her streets.
5 For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah,
By his God, the LORD of hosts,
Though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel."

6 Flee from the midst of Babylon,
And every one save his life!
Do not be cut off in her iniquity,
For this *is* the time of the LORD's vengeance;
He shall recompense her.
7 Babylon *was* a golden cup in the LORD's hand,
That made all the earth drunk.
The nations drank her wine;
Therefore the nations are deranged.
8 Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed.
Wail for her!
Take balm for her pain;
Perhaps she may be healed.

9 We would have healed Babylon,
But she is not healed.
Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country;
For her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies.
10 The LORD has revealed our righteousness.
Come and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

11 Make the arrows bright!
Gather the shields!
The LORD has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes.
For His plan *is* against Babylon to destroy it,
Because it *is* the vengeance of the LORD,
The vengeance for His temple.
12 Set up the standard on the walls of Babylon;
Make the guard strong,
Set up the watchmen,
Prepare the ambushes.
For the LORD has both devised and done
What He spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon.
13 O you who dwell by many waters,
Abundant in treasures,
Your end has come,
The measure of your covetousness.
14 The LORD of hosts has sworn by Himself:
"Surely I will fill you with men, as with locusts,
And they shall lift up a shout against you."

15 He has made the earth by His power;
He has established the world by His wisdom,
And stretched out the heaven by His understanding.
16 When He utters *His* voice—
There is a multitude of waters in the heavens:
"He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;
He makes lightnings for the rain;
He brings the wind out of His treasuries."[a]

17 Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge;
Every metalsmith is put to shame by the carved image;
For his molded image *is* falsehood,
And *there is* no breath in them.
18 They *are* futile, a work of errors;
In the time of their punishment they shall perish.
19 The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them,
For He *is* the Maker of all things;
And *Israel is* the tribe of His inheritance.
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.

20 "You *are* My battle-ax *and* weapons of war:

51:1 [a]A code word for Chaldea (Babylonia); may be translated *The Midst of Those Who Rise Up Against Me* **51:16** [a]Psalm 135:7

For with you I will break the nation in
pieces;
With you I will destroy kingdoms;
21 With you I will break in pieces the
horse and its rider;
With you I will break in pieces the
chariot and its rider;
22 With you also I will break in pieces
man and woman;
With you I will break in pieces old and
young;
With you I will break in pieces the
young man and the maiden;
23 With you also I will break in pieces the
shepherd and his flock;
With you I will break in pieces the
farmer and his yoke of oxen;
And with you I will break in pieces
governors and rulers.

24 "And I will repay Babylon
And all the inhabitants of Chaldea
For all the evil they have done
In Zion in your sight," says the LORD.

25 "Behold, I *am* against you, O destroying
mountain,
Who destroys all the earth," says the
LORD.
"And I will stretch out My hand against
you,
Roll you down from the rocks,
And make you a burnt mountain.
26 They shall not take from you a stone
for a corner
Nor a stone for a foundation,
But you shall be desolate forever,"
says the LORD.

27 Set up a banner in the land,
Blow the trumpet among the nations!
Prepare the nations against her,
Call the kingdoms together
against her:
Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.
Appoint a general against her;
Cause the horses to come up like the
bristling locusts.
28 Prepare against her the nations,
With the kings of the Medes,
Its governors and all its rulers,
All the land of his dominion.
29 And the land will tremble and sorrow;
For every purpose of the LORD shall be
performed against Babylon,
To make the land of Babylon a
desolation without inhabitant.
30 The mighty men of Babylon have
ceased fighting,
They have remained in their strongholds;
Their might has failed,
They became *like* women;
They have burned her dwelling places,
The bars of her *gate* are broken.
31 One runner will run to meet another,
And one messenger to meet another,
To show the king of Babylon that his
city is taken on *all* sides;
32 The passages are blocked,
The reeds they have burned with fire,
And the men of war are terrified.

33 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the
God of Israel:

"The daughter of Babylon *is* like a
threshing floor
When it is time to thresh her;
Yet a little while
And the time of her harvest will come."

34 "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon
Has devoured me, he has crushed me;
He has made me an empty vessel,
He has swallowed me up like a monster;
He has filled his stomach with my
delicacies,
He has spit me out.
35 Let the violence *done* to me and my
flesh *be* upon Babylon,"
The inhabitant of Zion will say;
"And my blood be upon the inhabitants
of Chaldea!"
Jerusalem will say.

36 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will plead your case and take
vengeance for you.
I will dry up her sea and make her
springs dry.
37 Babylon shall become a heap,
A dwelling place for jackals,
An astonishment and a hissing,
Without an inhabitant.
38 They shall roar together like lions,
They shall growl like lions' whelps.

39 In their excitement I will prepare
their feasts;
I will make them drunk,
That they may rejoice,
And sleep a perpetual sleep
And not awake," says the LORD.
40 "I will bring them down
Like lambs to the slaughter,
Like rams with male goats.

41 "Oh, how Sheshach[a] is taken!
Oh, how the praise of the whole earth
is seized!
How Babylon has become desolate
among the nations!
42 The sea has come up over Babylon;
She is covered with the multitude of
its waves.
43 Her cities are a desolation,
A dry land and a wilderness,
A land where no one dwells,
Through which no son of man passes.
44 I will punish Bel in Babylon,
And I will bring out of his mouth what
he has swallowed;
And the nations shall not stream to
him anymore.
Yes, the wall of Babylon shall fall.

45 "My people, go out of the midst of her!
And let everyone deliver himself from
the fierce anger of the LORD.
46 And lest your heart faint,
And you fear for the rumor that *will be*
heard in the land
(A rumor will come *one* year,
And after that, in *another* year
A rumor *will come*,
And violence in the land,
Ruler against ruler),
47 Therefore behold, the days are coming
That I will bring judgment on the
carved images of Babylon;
Her whole land shall be ashamed,
And all her slain shall fall in her midst.
48 Then the heavens and the earth and
all that *is* in them
Shall sing joyously over Babylon;
For the plunderers shall come to her
from the north," says the LORD.

49 As Babylon *has caused* the slain of Israel
to fall,

"Then the heavens and the earth and all that is in them shall sing joyously over Babylon; for the plunderers shall come to her from the north," says the LORD.

JEREMIAH 51:48

So at Babylon the slain of all the earth
shall fall.
50 You who have escaped the sword,
Get away! Do not stand still!
Remember the LORD afar off,
And let Jerusalem come to your mind.

51 We are ashamed because we have
heard reproach.
Shame has covered our faces,
For strangers have come into the
sanctuaries of the LORD's house.

52 "Therefore behold, the days are
coming," says the LORD,
"That I will bring judgment on her
carved images,
And throughout all her land the
wounded shall groan.
53 Though Babylon were to mount up to
heaven,
And though she were to fortify the
height of her strength,
Yet from Me plunderers would come to
her," says the LORD.

54 The sound of a cry *comes* from Babylon,
And great destruction from the land of
the Chaldeans,
55 Because the LORD is plundering Babylon
And silencing her loud voice,
Though her waves roar like great waters,
And the noise of their voice is uttered,
56 Because the plunderer comes against
her, against Babylon,
And her mighty men are taken.
Every one of their bows is broken;
For the LORD *is* the God of recompense,
He will surely repay.

57 "And I will make drunk
Her princes and wise men,
Her governors, her deputies, and her

51:41 [a]A code word for Babylon (compare Jeremiah 25:26)

mighty men.
And they shall sleep a perpetual sleep
And not awake," says the King,
Whose name *is* the LORD of hosts.

58Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"The broad walls of Babylon shall be
utterly broken,
And her high gates shall be burned
with fire;
The people will labor in vain,
And the nations, because of the fire;
And they shall be weary."

Jeremiah's Command to Seraiah

59The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And Seraiah *was* the quartermaster. 60So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. 61And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, 62then you shall say, 'O LORD, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.' 63Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, *that* you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. 64Then you shall say, 'Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.'"

Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah.

The Fall of Jerusalem Reviewed

52 Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 2He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 3For because of the anger of the LORD *this* happened in Jerusalem and Judah, till He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

4Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and *they* built a siege wall against it all around. 5So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 6By the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. 7Then the city *wall* was broken through, and all the men of war fled and went out of the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls, which *was* by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans *were* near the city all around. And they went by way of the plain.[a]

8But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. 9So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he pronounced judgment on him. 10Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. And he killed all the princes of Judah in Riblah. 11He also put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in bronze fetters, took him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

The Temple and City Plundered and Burned

12Now in the fifth month, on the tenth *day* of the month (which *was* the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, *who* served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 13He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. 14And all the army of the Chaldeans who *were* with the captain of the guard broke down all the walls of Jerusalem all around. 15Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive *some* of the poor people, the rest of the people who remained in the city, the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen. 16But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left *some* of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.

17The bronze pillars that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the

52:7 [a]Or *the Arabah*, that is, the Jordan Valley

bronze Sea that *were* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried all their bronze to Babylon. 18They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the bowls, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the *priests* ministered. 19The basins, the firepans, the bowls, the pots, the lampstands, the spoons, and the cups, whatever *was* solid gold and whatever *was* solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. 20The two pillars, one Sea, the twelve bronze bulls which *were* under *it, and* the carts, which King Solomon had made for the house of the LORD—the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. 21Now *concerning* the pillars: the height of one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, a measuring line of twelve cubits could measure its circumference, and its thickness *was* four fingers; *it was* hollow. 22A capital of bronze *was* on it; and the height of one capital *was* five cubits, with a network and pomegranates all around the capital, all of bronze. The second pillar, with pomegranates was the same. 23There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; all the pomegranates, all around on the network, *were* one hundred.

The People Taken Captive to Babylonia

24The captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. 25He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, seven men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the principal scribe of the army who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city. 26And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 27Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

28These *are* the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three Jews; 29in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred and thirty-two persons; 30in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred and forty-five persons. All the persons *were* four thousand six hundred.

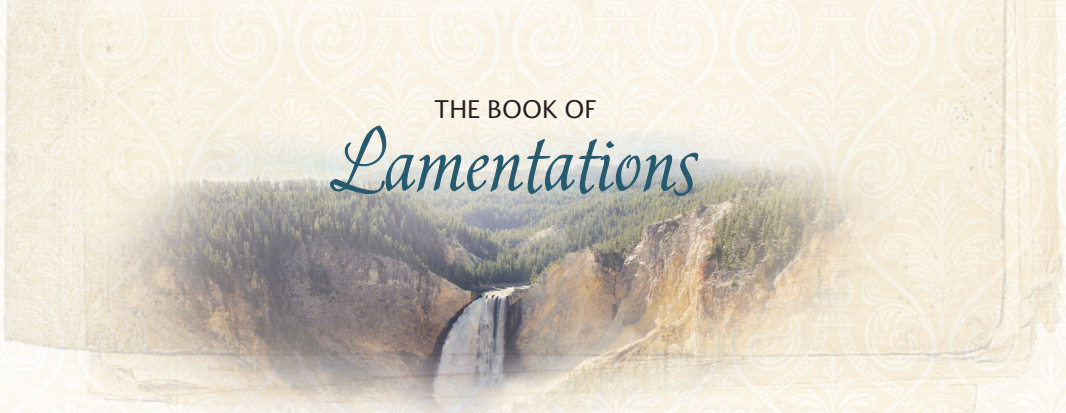
Jehoiachin Released from Prison

31Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-Merodach[a] king of Babylon, in the *first* year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. 32And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon. 33So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the *king* all the days of his life. 34And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion for each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

52:31 [a]Or *Awil-Marduk*

THE BOOK OF

Lamentations



Jerusalem in Affliction

1 How lonely sits the city
That was full of people!
How like a widow is she,
Who *was* great among the nations!
The princess among the provinces
Has become a slave!

2 She weeps bitterly in the night,
Her tears *are* on her cheeks;
Among all her lovers
She has none to comfort *her.*
All her friends have dealt
treacherously with her;
They have become her enemies.

3 Judah has gone into captivity,
Under affliction and hard servitude;
She dwells among the nations,
She finds no rest;
All her persecutors overtake her in
dire straits.

4 The roads to Zion mourn
Because no one comes to the set
feasts.
All her gates are desolate;
Her priests sigh,
Her virgins are afflicted,
And she *is* in bitterness.

5 Her adversaries have become the
master,
Her enemies prosper;
For the LORD has afflicted her
Because of the multitude of her
transgressions.
Her children have gone into captivity
before the enemy.

6 And from the daughter of Zion
All her splendor has departed.
Her princes have become like deer
That find no pasture,
That flee without strength
Before the pursuer.

7 In the days of her affliction and roaming,
Jerusalem remembers all her
pleasant things
That she had in the days of old.
When her people fell into the hand
of the enemy,
With no one to help her,
The adversaries saw her
And mocked at her downfall.[a]

8 Jerusalem has sinned gravely,
Therefore she has become vile.[a]
All who honored her despise her
Because they have seen her nakedness;
Yes, she sighs and turns away.

9 Her uncleanness *is* in her skirts;
She did not consider her destiny;
Therefore her collapse was awesome;
She had no comforter.
"O LORD, behold my affliction,
For *the* enemy is exalted!"

10 The adversary has spread his hand
Over all her pleasant things;
For she has seen the nations enter
her sanctuary,
Those whom You commanded
Not to enter Your assembly.

11 All her people sigh,
They seek bread;
They have given their valuables for
food to restore life.
"See, O LORD, and consider,
For I am scorned."

12 "*Is it* nothing to you, all you who pass by?
Behold and see

1:7 [a]Vulgate reads *her Sabbaths.* **1:8** [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *moved* or *removed.*

If there is any sorrow like my sorrow,
Which has been brought on me,
Which the LORD has inflicted
In the day of His fierce anger.

13 "From above He has sent fire into
my bones,
And it overpowered them;
He has spread a net for my feet
And turned me back;
He has made me desolate
And faint all the day.

14 "The yoke of my transgressions was
bound;[a]
They were woven together by His hands,
And thrust upon my neck.
He made my strength fail;
The Lord delivered me into the hands
of *those whom* I am not able to
withstand.

15 "The Lord has trampled underfoot all
my mighty *men* in my midst;
He has called an assembly against me
To crush my young men;
The Lord trampled *as* in a winepress
The virgin daughter of Judah.

16 "For these *things* I weep;
My eye, my eye overflows with water;
Because the comforter, who should
restore my life,
Is far from me.
My children are desolate
Because the enemy prevailed."

17 Zion spreads out her hands,
But no one comforts her;
The LORD has commanded concerning
Jacob
That those around him *become* his
adversaries;
Jerusalem has become an unclean
thing among them.

18 "The LORD is righteous,
For I rebelled against His
commandment.
Hear now, all peoples,
And behold my sorrow;
My virgins and my young men
Have gone into captivity.

19 "I called for my lovers,
But they deceived me;
My priests and my elders
Breathed their last in the city,
While they sought food
To restore their life.

20 "See, O LORD, that I *am* in distress;
My soul is troubled;
My heart is overturned within me,
For I have been very rebellious.
Outside the sword bereaves,
At home *it is* like death.

21 "They have heard that I sigh,
But no one comforts me.
All my enemies have heard of my
trouble;
They are glad that You have done *it.*
Bring on the day You have announced,
That they may become like me.

22 "Let all their wickedness come
before You,
And do to them as You have done to me
For all my transgressions;
For my sighs *are* many,
And my heart *is* faint."

God's Anger with Jerusalem

2 How the Lord has covered the
daughter of Zion
With a cloud in His anger!
He cast down from heaven to the earth
The beauty of Israel,
And did not remember His footstool
In the day of His anger.

2 The Lord has swallowed up and has
not pitied
All the dwelling places of Jacob.
He has thrown down in His wrath
The strongholds of the daughter of
Judah;
He has brought *them* down to the
ground;
He has profaned the kingdom and
its princes.

3 He has cut off in fierce anger
Every horn of Israel;
He has drawn back His right hand

1:14 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *watched over.*

From before the enemy.
He has blazed against Jacob like a flaming fire
Devouring all around.

4 Standing like an enemy, He has bent His bow;
With His right hand, like an adversary,
He has slain all *who were* pleasing to His eye;
On the tent of the daughter of Zion,
He has poured out His fury like fire.

5 The Lord was like an enemy.
He has swallowed up Israel,
He has swallowed up all her palaces;
He has destroyed her strongholds,
And has increased mourning and lamentation
In the daughter of Judah.

6 He has done violence to His tabernacle,
As if it were a garden;
He has destroyed His place of assembly;
The LORD has caused
The appointed feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion.
In His burning indignation He has spurned the king and the priest.

7 The Lord has spurned His altar,
He has abandoned His sanctuary;
He has given up the walls of her palaces
Into the hand of the enemy.
They have made a noise in the house of the LORD
As on the day of a set feast.

8 The LORD has purposed to destroy
The wall of the daughter of Zion.
He has stretched out a line;
He has not withdrawn His hand from destroying;
Therefore He has caused the rampart and wall to lament;
They languished together.

9 Her gates have sunk into the ground;
He has destroyed and broken her bars.
Her king and her princes *are* among the nations;
The Law *is* no *more,*
And her prophets find no vision from the LORD.

10 The elders of the daughter of Zion
Sit on the ground *and* keep silence;
They throw dust on their heads
And gird themselves with sackcloth.
The virgins of Jerusalem
Bow their heads to the ground.

11 My eyes fail with tears,
My heart is troubled;
My bile is poured on the ground
Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,
Because the children and the infants
Faint in the streets of the city.

12 They say to their mothers,
"Where *is* grain and wine?"
As they swoon like the wounded
In the streets of the city,
As their life is poured out
In their mothers' bosom.

13 How shall I console you?
To what shall I liken you,
O daughter of Jerusalem?
What shall I compare with you, that I may comfort you,
O virgin daughter of Zion?
For your ruin *is* spread wide as the sea;
Who can heal you?

14 Your prophets have seen for you
False and deceptive visions;
They have not uncovered your iniquity,
To bring back your captives,
But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions.

15 All who pass by clap *their* hands at you;
They hiss and shake their heads
At the daughter of Jerusalem:
"*Is* this the city that is called
'The perfection of beauty,
The joy of the whole earth'?"

16 All your enemies have opened their mouth against you;
They hiss and gnash *their* teeth.
They say, "We have swallowed *her* up!
Surely this *is* the day we have waited for;
We have found *it,* we have seen *it!*"

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

LAMENTATIONS 3:22–24

You don't need to be rescued from life-threatening danger or see God's miraculous provision in the direst of financial crises to truly know the faithfulness of the Lord. God remains faithful day in and day out in the largest and smallest of circumstances. Thomas Chisholm wrote "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" as a testament to God's faithfulness throughout his very ordinary life. Born in a log cabin in Franklin, Kentucky, Chisholm became a Christian when he was twenty-seven and entered the ministry when he was thirty-six, though poor health forced him to retire after just one year. During the rest of his life, Chisholm spent many years living in New Jersey and working as a life insurance agent. Still, even with a desk job, he wrote nearly 1,200 poems throughout his life, including several published hymns.

Chisholm explained toward the end of his life, "My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. Although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness."

Just think, with each new day, God gives us the chance to prove His faithfulness. And throughout history, He's never once been proven wrong, for His mercies are new every morning, no matter what.

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Thomas Chisholm | 1923

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father!
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Though changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:

Great is Thy faithfulness,
Great is Thy faithfulness,
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Refrain

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Refrain

The LORD is good to those who wait
for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.
LAMENTATIONS 3:25

Therefore the LORD will wait,
that He may be gracious to you;
and therefore He will be exalted,
that He may have mercy on you.
For the LORD is a God of justice;
blessed are all those who wait for Him.
ISAIAH 30:18

Waiting. Who likes it? It is the hardest thing of all. Doers we are, busy to fix. Accomplishment is the one applauded virtue of our day. Yet the Lord is good to those who wait, and He is good to waiters because He wants to be gracious to us. He wants to show us the tastes and sights and sounds that come to those who will learn to *savor*, not devour, life. If we will stop to hear our own souls, we will discover that our souls seek Him. He is marvelously patient for that. He will wait until we wear ourselves out, use up our food and water, human provisions, become famished and parched with thirst. He will be patient for us to learn what we need—and discover that our needs have been distilled down to one—the Lord Himself. Then, with justice and mercy—such mercy—He will restore our souls with Himself, who is fullness of joy.



17 The LORD has done what He purposed;
He has fulfilled His word
Which He commanded in days of old.
He has thrown down and has
not pitied,
And He has caused an enemy to
rejoice over you;
He has exalted the horn of your
adversaries.

18 Their heart cried out to the Lord,
"O wall of the daughter of Zion,
Let tears run down like a river day
and night;
Give yourself no relief;
Give your eyes no rest.

19 "Arise, cry out in the night,
At the beginning of the watches;
Pour out your heart like water before
the face of the Lord.
Lift your hands toward Him
For the life of your young children,
Who faint from hunger at the head
of every street."

20 "See, O LORD, and consider!
To whom have You done this?
Should the women eat their offspring,
The children they have cuddled?[a]
Should the priest and prophet be slain
In the sanctuary of the Lord?

21 "Young and old lie
On the ground in the streets;
My virgins and my young men
Have fallen by the sword;
You have slain *them* in the day of
Your anger,
You have slaughtered *and* not pitied.

22 "You have invited as to a feast day
The terrors that surround me.
In the day of the LORD's anger
There was no refugee or survivor.
Those whom I have borne and
brought up
My enemies have destroyed."

The Prophet's Anguish and Hope

3 I *am* the man *who* has seen affliction
by the rod of His wrath.
2 He has led me and made *me* walk

2:20 [a]Vulgate reads *a span long.*

In darkness and not *in* light.
3 Surely He has turned His hand
against me
Time and time again throughout
the day.

4 He has aged my flesh and my skin,
And broken my bones.
5 He has besieged me
And surrounded *me* with bitterness
and woe.
6 He has set me in dark places
Like the dead of long ago.

7 He has hedged me in so that I cannot
get out;
He has made my chain heavy.
8 Even when I cry and shout,
He shuts out my prayer.
9 He has blocked my ways with
hewn stone;
He has made my paths crooked.

10 He *has been* to me a bear lying in wait,
Like a lion in ambush.
11 He has turned aside my ways and torn
me in pieces;
He has made me desolate.
12 He has bent His bow
And set me up as a target for
the arrow.

13 He has caused the arrows of His quiver
To pierce my loins.[a]
14 I have become the ridicule of all my
people—
Their taunting song all the day.
15 He has filled me with bitterness,
He has made me drink wormwood.

16 He has also broken my teeth with gravel,
And covered me with ashes.
17 You have moved my soul far from peace;
I have forgotten prosperity.
18 And I said, "My strength and my hope
Have perished from the LORD."

19 Remember my affliction and roaming,
The wormwood and the gall.
20 My soul still remembers
And sinks within me.
21 This I recall to my mind,
Therefore I have hope.

22 *Through* the LORD's mercies we are not
consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.
23 *They are* new every morning;
Great *is* Your faithfulness.
24 "The LORD *is* my portion," says my soul,
"Therefore I hope in Him!"

25 The LORD *is* good to those who wait
for Him,
To the soul *who* seeks Him.
26 *It is* good that *one* should hope and
wait quietly
For the salvation of the LORD.
27 *It is* good for a man to bear
The yoke in his youth.

28 Let him sit alone and keep silent,
Because *God* has laid *it* on him;
29 Let him put his mouth in the dust—
There may yet be hope.
30 Let him give *his* cheek to the one who
strikes him,
And be full of reproach.

31 For the Lord will not cast off forever.
32 Though He causes grief,
Yet He will show compassion
According to the multitude of His
mercies.
33 For He does not afflict willingly,
Nor grieve the children of men.

34 To crush under one's feet
All the prisoners of the earth,
35 To turn aside the justice *due* a man
Before the face of the Most High,
36 Or subvert a man in his cause—
The Lord does not approve.

37 Who *is* he *who* speaks and it comes
to pass,
When the Lord has not commanded *it?*
38 *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most
High
That woe and well-being proceed?
39 Why should a living man complain,
A man for the punishment of his sins?

40 Let us search out and examine our ways,
And turn back to the LORD;
41 Let us lift our hearts and hands
To God in heaven.

3:13 [a]Literally *kidneys*

42 We have transgressed and rebelled;
You have not pardoned.

43 You have covered *Yourself* with anger
And pursued us;
You have slain *and* not pitied.
44 You have covered Yourself with a cloud,
That prayer should not pass through.
45 You have made us an offscouring and refuse
In the midst of the peoples.

46 All our enemies
Have opened their mouths against us.
47 Fear and a snare have come upon us,
Desolation and destruction.
48 My eyes overflow with rivers of water
For the destruction of the daughter of my people.

49 My eyes flow and do not cease,
Without interruption,
50 Till the LORD from heaven
Looks down and sees.
51 My eyes bring suffering to my soul
Because of all the daughters of my city.

52 My enemies without cause
Hunted me down like a bird.
53 They silenced[a] my life in the pit
And threw stones at me.
54 The waters flowed over my head;
I said, "I am cut off!"

55 I called on Your name, O LORD,
From the lowest pit.
56 You have heard my voice:
"Do not hide Your ear
From my sighing, from my cry for help."
57 You drew near on the day I called on You,
And said, "Do not fear!"

58 O Lord, You have pleaded the case for my soul;
You have redeemed my life.
59 O LORD, You have seen *how* I am wronged;
Judge my case.
60 You have seen all their vengeance,
All their schemes against me.

61 You have heard their reproach, O LORD,
All their schemes against me,
62 The lips of my enemies
And their whispering against me all the day.
63 Look at their sitting down and their rising up;
I *am* their taunting song.

64 Repay them, O LORD,
According to the work of their hands.
65 Give them a veiled[a] heart;
Your curse *be* upon them!
66 In Your anger,
Pursue and destroy them
From under the heavens of the LORD.

The Degradation of Zion

4 How the gold has become dim!
How changed the fine gold!
The stones of the sanctuary are scattered
At the head of every street.

2 The precious sons of Zion,
Valuable as fine gold,
How they are regarded as clay pots,
The work of the hands of the potter!

3 Even the jackals present their breasts
To nurse their young;
But the daughter of my people *is* cruel,
Like ostriches in the wilderness.

4 The tongue of the infant clings
To the roof of its mouth for thirst;
The young children ask for bread,
But no one breaks *it* for them.

5 Those who ate delicacies
Are desolate in the streets;
Those who were brought up in scarlet
Embrace ash heaps.

6 The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people
Is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom,
Which was overthrown in a moment,
With no hand to help her!

7 Her Nazirites[a] were brighter than snow
And whiter than milk;
They were more ruddy in body than rubies,
Like sapphire in their appearance.

3:53 [a]Septuagint reads *put to death.* **3:65** [a]A Jewish tradition reads *sorrow of.* **4:7** [a]Or *nobles*

8 *Now* their appearance is blacker than
soot;
They go unrecognized in the streets;
Their skin clings to their bones,
It has become as dry as wood.

9 *Those* slain by the sword are better off
Than *those* who die of hunger;
For these pine away,
Stricken *for lack* of the fruits of the field.

10 The hands of the compassionate women
Have cooked their own children;
They became food for them
In the destruction of the daughter of
my people.

11 The LORD has fulfilled His fury,
He has poured out His fierce anger.
He kindled a fire in Zion,
And it has devoured its foundations.

12 The kings of the earth,
And all inhabitants of the world,
Would not have believed
That the adversary and the enemy
Could enter the gates of Jerusalem—

13 Because of the sins of her prophets
And the iniquities of her priests,
Who shed in her midst
The blood of the just.

14 They wandered blind in the streets;
They have defiled themselves with
blood,
So that no one would touch their
garments.

15 They cried out to them,
"Go away, unclean!
Go away, go away,
Do not touch us!"
When they fled and wandered,
Those among the nations said,
"They shall no longer dwell *here*."

16 The face[a] of the LORD scattered them;
He no longer regards them.
The people do not respect the priests
Nor show favor to the elders.

17 Still our eyes failed us,
Watching vainly for our help;
In our watching we watched
For a nation *that* could not save *us*.

18 They tracked our steps
So that we could not walk in
our streets.
Our end was near;
Our days were over,
For our end had come.

19 Our pursuers were swifter
Than the eagles of the heavens.
They pursued us on the mountains
And lay in wait for us in the wilderness.

20 The breath of our nostrils, the
anointed of the LORD,
Was caught in their pits,
Of whom we said, "Under his shadow
We shall live among the nations."

21 Rejoice and be glad, O daughter
of Edom,
You who dwell in the land of UZ!
The cup shall also pass over to you
And you shall become drunk and make
yourself naked.

22 *The punishment of* your iniquity is
accomplished,
O daughter of Zion;
He will no longer send you into captivity.
He will punish your iniquity,
O daughter of Edom;
He will uncover your sins!

A Prayer for Restoration

5 Remember, O LORD, what has come
upon us;
Look, and behold our reproach!
2 Our inheritance has been turned over
to aliens,
And our houses to foreigners.
3 We have become orphans and waifs,
Our mothers *are* like widows.

4 We pay for the water we drink,
And our wood comes at a price.
5 *They* pursue at our heels;[a]
We labor *and* have no rest.
6 We have given our hand *to* the
Egyptians

4:16 [a]Targum reads *anger.* **5:5** [a]Literally *necks*

And the Assyrians, to be satisfied
with bread.

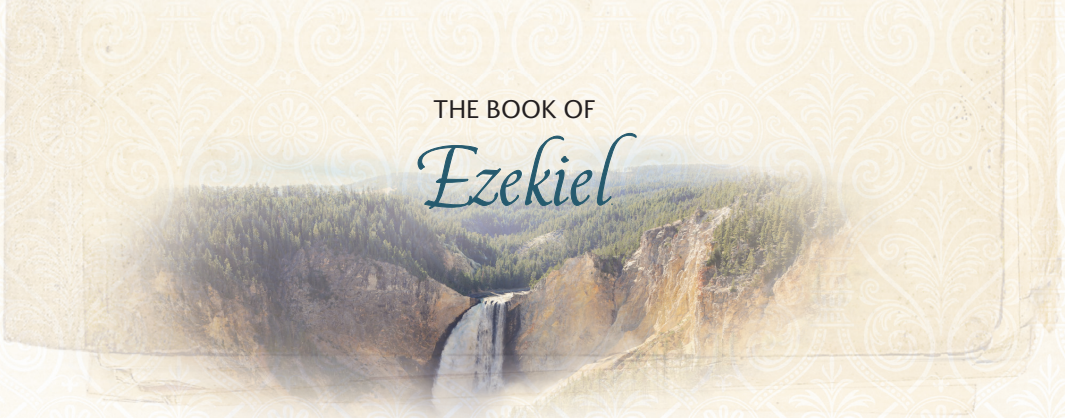
7 Our fathers sinned *and are* no more,
But we bear their iniquities.
8 Servants rule over us;
There is none to deliver *us* from their
hand.
9 We get our bread *at the risk* of our lives,
Because of the sword in the wilderness.

10 Our skin is hot as an oven,
Because of the fever of famine.
11 They ravished the women in Zion,
The maidens in the cities of Judah.
12 Princes were hung up by their hands,
And elders were not respected.
13 Young men ground at the millstones;
Boys staggered under *loads of* wood.
14 The elders have ceased *gathering at*
the gate,
And the young men from their music.
15 The joy of our heart has ceased;
Our dance has turned into
mourning.
16 The crown has fallen *from* our head.
Woe to us, for we have sinned!
17 Because of this our heart is faint;
Because of these *things* our eyes
grow dim;
18 Because of Mount Zion which is
desolate,
With foxes walking about on it.

19 You, O LORD, remain forever;
Your throne from generation to
generation.
20 Why do You forget us forever,
And forsake us for so long a time?
21 Turn us back to You, O LORD, and we
will be restored;
Renew our days as of old,
22 Unless You have utterly rejected us,
And are very angry with us!

THE BOOK OF

Ezekiel



Ezekiel's Vision of God

1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month,* on the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by the River Chebar, *that* the heavens were opened and I saw visions[a] of God. 2On the fifth *day* of the month, which *was* in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, 3the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans[a] by the River Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was upon him there.

4Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness *was* all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. 5Also from within it *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this *was* their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. 6Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. 7Their legs *were* straight, and the soles of their feet *were* like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. 8The hands of a man *were* under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. 9Their wings touched one another. *The creatures* did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.

10As for the likeness of their faces, *each* had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. 11Thus *were* their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two *wings* of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies. 12And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.

13As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. 14And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.

15Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel *was* on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces. 16The appearance of the wheels and their workings *was* like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings *was,* as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. 17When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went. 18As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims *were* full of eyes, all around the four of them. 19When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. 20Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, *because* there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures[a] *was* in the wheels. 21When those went, *these* went; when those stood, *these* stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures[a] *was* in the wheels.

22The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures[a] *was* like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads. 23And under the firmament their wings *spread out* straight, one toward another. Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two

1:1 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *a vision.* **1:3** [a]Or *Babylonians,* and so elsewhere in this book **1:20** [a]Literally *living creature;* Septuagint and Vulgate read *spirit of life;* Targum reads *creatures.* **1:21** [a]Literally *living creature;* Septuagint and Vulgate read *spirit of life;* Targum reads *creatures.* **1:22** [a]Following Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *living creature.*

which covered the other side of the body.
24When they went, I heard the noise of
their wings, like the noise of many waters,
like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like
the noise of an army; and when they stood
still, they let down their wings. 25A voice
came from above the firmament that *was*
over their heads; whenever they stood, they
let down their wings.

26And above the firmament over their
heads *was* the likeness of a throne, in appear-
ance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of
the throne *was* a likeness with the appear-
ance of a man high above it. 27Also from the
appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as
it were, the color of amber with the appear-
ance of fire all around within it; and from
the appearance of His waist and downward
I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with
brightness all around. 28Like the appearance
of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so *was*
the appearance of the brightness all around
it. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of
the glory of the LORD.

Ezekiel Sent to Rebellious Israel

So when I saw *it,* I fell on my face, and I
heard a voice of One speaking.

2 And He said to me, "Son of man, stand on
your feet, and I will speak to you." 2Then
the Spirit entered me when He spoke to
me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him
who spoke to me. 3And He said to me: "Son
of man, I am sending you to the children of
Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled
against Me; they and their fathers have
transgressed against Me to this very day. 4For
they are impudent and stubborn children. I
am sending you to them, and you shall say to
them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' 5As for them,
whether they hear or whether they refuse—
for they *are* a rebellious house—yet they will
know that a prophet has been among them.

6"And you, son of man, do not be afraid
of them nor be afraid of their words,
though briers and thorns *are* with you
and you dwell among scorpions; do not
be afraid of their words or dismayed by
their looks, though they *are* a rebellious
house. 7You shall speak My words to them,
whether they hear or whether they refuse,
for they *are* rebellious. 8But you, son of
man, hear what I say to you. Do not be
rebellious like that rebellious house; open
your mouth and eat what I give you."

9Now when I looked, there was a hand
stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of
a book *was* in it. 10Then He spread it before
me; and *there was* writing on the inside and
on the outside, and written on it *were* lam-
entations and mourning and woe.

3 Moreover He said to me, "Son of man,
eat what you find; eat this scroll, and
go, speak to the house of Israel." 2So I
opened my mouth, and He caused me to
eat that scroll.

3And He said to me, "Son of man, feed
your belly, and fill your stomach with this
scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in
my mouth like honey in sweetness.

4Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to
the house of Israel and speak with My words
to them. 5For you *are* not sent to a people of
unfamiliar speech and of hard language, *but*
to the house of Israel, 6not to many people
of unfamiliar speech and of hard language,
whose words you cannot understand. Surely,
had I sent you to them, they would have lis-
tened to you. 7But the house of Israel will
not listen to you, because they will not
listen to Me; for all the house of Israel *are*
impudent and hard-hearted. 8Behold, I have
made your face strong against their faces,
and your forehead strong against their fore-
heads. 9Like adamant stone, harder than
flint, I have made your forehead; do not
be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their
looks, though they *are* a rebellious house."

10Moreover He said to me: "Son of man,
receive into your heart all My words that I
speak to you, and hear with your ears. 11And
go, get to the captives, to the children of
your people, and speak to them and tell
them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' whether
they hear, or whether they refuse."

12Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I
heard behind me a great thunderous voice:
"Blessed *is* the glory of the LORD from His
place!" 13*I* also *heard* the noise of the wings
of the living creatures that touched one
another, and the noise of the wheels beside
them, and a great thunderous noise. 14So
the Spirit lifted me up and took me away,
and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my
spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong
upon me. 15Then I came to the captives at

Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

Ezekiel Is a Watchman

16 Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 17 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: 18 When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

20 "Again, when a righteous *man* turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. 21 Nevertheless if you warn the righteous *man* that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul."

22 Then the hand of the LORD was upon me there, and He said to me, "Arise, go out into the plain, and there I shall talk with you."

23 So I arose and went out into the plain, and behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, like the glory which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. 24 Then the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet, and spoke with me and said to me: "Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25 And you, O son of man, surely they will put ropes on you and bind you with them, so that you cannot go out among them. 26 I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute and not be one to rebuke them, for they *are* a rebellious house. 27 But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they *are* a rebellious house.

The Siege of Jerusalem Portrayed

4 "You also, son of man, take a clay tablet and lay it before you, and portray on it a city, Jerusalem. 2 Lay siege against it, build a siege wall against it, and heap up a mound against it; set camps against it also, and place battering rams against it all around. 3 Moreover take for yourself an iron plate, and set it *as* an iron wall between you and the city. Set your face against it, and it shall be besieged, and you shall lay siege against it. This *will be* a sign to the house of Israel.

4 "Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. *According* to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. 5 For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. 6 And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year.

Will we march only to the music of time, or will we, risking criticism and abuse, march to the soul-saving music of eternity?

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

7 "Therefore you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem; your arm *shall be* uncovered, and you shall prophesy against it. 8 And surely I will restrain you so that you cannot turn from one side to another till you have ended the days of your siege.

9 "Also take for yourself wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt; put them into one vessel, and make bread of them for yourself. *During* the number of days that you lie on your side, three hundred and ninety days, you shall eat it. 10 And your food which you eat *shall be* by weight, twenty shekels a day; from time to time you shall eat it. 11 You shall also drink water by measure, one-sixth of a hin; from time to time you shall drink. 12 And you shall eat it *as* barley cakes; and bake it using fuel of human waste in their sight."

13 Then the LORD said, "So shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, where I will drive them."

14 So I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Indeed I have never defiled myself from my youth till now; I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has abominable flesh ever come into my mouth."

15 Then He said to me, "See, I am giving you cow dung instead of human waste, and you shall prepare your bread over it."

16 Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, surely I will cut off the supply of bread in Jerusalem; they shall eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and shall drink water by measure and with dread, 17 that they may lack bread and water, and be dismayed with one another, and waste away because of their iniquity.

A Sword Against Jerusalem

5 "And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, and pass *it* over your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the *hair*. 2 You shall burn with fire one-third in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are finished; then you shall take one-third and strike around *it* with the sword, and one-third you shall scatter in the wind: I will draw out a sword after them. 3 You shall also take a small number of them and bind them in the edge of your *garment*. 4 Then take some of them again and throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will go out into all the house of Israel.

5 "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'This *is* Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her. 6 She has rebelled against My judgments by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against My statutes more than the countries that *are* all around her; for they have refused My judgments, and they have not walked in My statutes.' 7 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have multiplied *disobedience* more than the nations that *are* all around you, have not walked in My statutes nor kept My judgments, nor even done[a] according to the judgments of the nations that *are* all around you'— 8 therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Indeed I, even I, *am* against you and will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. 9 And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations. 10 Therefore fathers shall eat *their* sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you, and all of you who remain I will scatter to all the winds.

11 'Therefore, *as* I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish *you;* My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. 12 One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

13 'Thus shall My anger be spent, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them, and I will be avenged; and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* in My zeal, when I have spent My fury upon them. 14 Moreover I will make you a waste and a reproach among the nations that *are* all around you, in the sight of all who pass by.

15 'So it[a] shall be a reproach, a taunt, a lesson, and an astonishment to the nations that *are* all around you, when I execute judgments among you in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I, the LORD, have spoken. 16 When I send against them the terrible arrows of famine which shall be for destruction, which I will send to destroy you, I will increase the famine upon you and cut off your supply of bread. 17 So I will send against you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you. Pestilence and blood shall pass through you, and I will bring the sword against you. I, the LORD, have spoken.'"

Judgment on Idolatrous Israel

6 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 2 "Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, 3 and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD!

5:7 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *but have done* (compare 11:12).
5:15 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *you*.

Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains,
to the hills, to the ravines, and to the valleys:
"Indeed I, *even* I, will bring a sword against
you, and I will destroy your high places.
4Then your altars shall be desolate, your
incense altars shall be broken, and I will
cast down your slain *men* before your idols.
5And I will lay the corpses of the children
of Israel before their idols, and I will scat-
ter your bones all around your altars. 6In all
your dwelling places the cities shall be laid
waste, and the high places shall be desolate,
so that your altars may be laid waste and
made desolate, your idols may be broken
and made to cease, your incense altars may
be cut down, and your works may be abol-
ished. 7The slain shall fall in your midst,
and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

8"Yet I will leave a remnant, so that
you may have *some* who escape the sword
among the nations, when you are scattered
through the countries. 9Then those of you
who escape will remember Me among the
nations where they are carried captive,
because I was crushed by their adulterous
heart which has departed from Me, and
by their eyes which play the harlot after
their idols; they will loathe themselves for
the evils which they committed in all their
abominations. 10And they shall know that I
am the LORD; I have not said in vain that I
would bring this calamity upon them."

11"Thus says the Lord GOD: "Pound your
fists and stamp your feet, and say, 'Alas,
for all the evil abominations of the house
of Israel! For they shall fall by the sword,
by famine, and by pestilence. 12He who is
far off shall die by the pestilence, he who
is near shall fall by the sword, and he who
remains and is besieged shall die by the
famine. Thus will I spend My fury upon
them. 13Then you shall know that I *am* the
LORD, when their slain are among their
idols all around their altars, on every high
hill, on all the mountaintops, under every
green tree, and under every thick oak,
wherever they offered sweet incense to all
their idols. 14So I will stretch out My hand
against them and make the land desolate,
yes, more desolate than the wilderness
toward Diblah, in all their dwelling places.
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.'" '"

Judgment on Israel Is Near

7 Moreover the word of the LORD came to
me, saying, 2"And you, son of man, thus
says the Lord GOD to the land of Israel:

'An end! The end has come upon the
four corners of the land.
3 Now the end *has come* upon you,
And I will send My anger against you;
I will judge you according to your ways,
And I will repay you for all your
abominations.
4 My eye will not spare you,
Nor will I have pity;
But I will repay your ways,
And your abominations will be in
your midst;
Then you shall know that I *am*
the LORD!'

5"Thus says the Lord GOD:

'A disaster, a singular disaster;
Behold, it has come!
6 An end has come,
The end has come;
It has dawned for you;
Behold, it has come!
7 Doom has come to you, you who dwell
in the land;
The time has come,
A day of trouble *is* near,
And not of rejoicing in the mountains.
8 Now upon you I will soon pour out
My fury,
And spend My anger upon you;
I will judge you according to your ways,
And I will repay you for all your
abominations.

9 'My eye will not spare,
Nor will I have pity;
I will repay you according to your ways,
And your abominations will be in
your midst.
Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD
who strikes.

10 'Behold, the day!
Behold, it has come!
Doom has gone out;
The rod has blossomed,
Pride has budded.

11 Violence has risen up into a rod of
wickedness;
None of them *shall remain,*
None of their multitude,
None of them;
Nor *shall there be* wailing for them.
12 The time has come,
The day draws near.

'Let not the buyer rejoice,
Nor the seller mourn,
For wrath *is* on their whole multitude.
13 For the seller shall not return to what
has been sold,
Though he may still be alive;
For the vision concerns the whole
multitude,
And it shall not turn back;
No one will strengthen himself
Who lives in iniquity.

14 'They have blown the trumpet and
made everyone ready,
But no one goes to battle;
For My wrath *is* on all their multitude.
15 The sword *is* outside,
And the pestilence and famine within.
Whoever *is* in the field
Will die by the sword;
And whoever *is* in the city,
Famine and pestilence will devour him.

16 'Those who survive will escape and be
on the mountains
Like doves of the valleys,
All of them mourning,
Each for his iniquity.
17 Every hand will be feeble,
And every knee will be *as* weak
as water.
18 They will also be girded with sackcloth;
Horror will cover them;
Shame *will be* on every face,
Baldness on all their heads.

19 'They will throw their silver into the
streets,
And their gold will be like refuse;
Their silver and their gold will not be
able to deliver them
In the day of the wrath of the LORD;
They will not satisfy their souls,
Nor fill their stomachs,
Because it became their stumbling
block of iniquity.

20 'As for the beauty of his ornaments,
He set it in majesty;
But they made from it
The images of their abominations—
Their detestable things;
Therefore I have made it
Like refuse to them.
21 I will give it as plunder
Into the hands of strangers,
And to the wicked of the earth as spoil;
And they shall defile it.
22 I will turn My face from them,
And they will defile My secret place;
For robbers shall enter it and defile it.

23 'Make a chain,
For the land is filled with crimes
of blood,
And the city is full of violence.
24 Therefore I will bring the worst of the
Gentiles,
And they will possess their houses;
I will cause the pomp of the strong to
cease,
And their holy places shall be defiled.
25 Destruction comes;
They will seek peace, but *there shall be*
none.
26 Disaster will come upon disaster,
And rumor will be upon rumor.
Then they will seek a vision from a
prophet;
But the law will perish from the priest,
And counsel from the elders.

27 'The king will mourn,
The prince will be clothed with
desolation,
And the hands of the common people
will tremble.
I will do to them according to their way,
And according to what they deserve I
will judge them;
Then they shall know that I *am*
the LORD!'"

Abominations in the Temple

8 And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth *month,* on the fifth *day* of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders

of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there. 2Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire—from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber. 3He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner *court*, where the seat of the image of jealousy *was*, which provokes to jealousy. 4And behold, the glory of the God of Israel *was* there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

5Then He said to me, "Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north." So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance.

6Furthermore He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations." 7So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. 8Then He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall"; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door.

9And He said to me, "Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there." 10So I went in and saw, and there—every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls. 11And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. 12Then He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.'"

13And He said to me, "Turn again, *and* you will see greater abominations that they are doing." 14So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

15Then He said to me, "Have you seen *this*, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these." 16So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east.

17And He said to me, "Have you seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. 18Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

The Wicked Are Slain

9 Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each *with* a deadly weapon in his hand." 2And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them *was* clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

3Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple.[a] And He called to the man clothed with linen, who *had* the writer's inkhorn at his side; 4and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

5To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. 6Utterly slay old *and* young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom *is* the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who *were* before the temple. 7Then He said to them, "Defile the temple,

9:3 [a]Literally *house*

and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city.

8So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left *alone;* and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?"

9Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!' 10And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, *but* I will recompense their deeds on their own head."

11Just then, the man clothed with linen, who *had* the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, "I have done as You commanded me."

The Glory Departs from the Temple

10 And I looked, and there in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a throne. 2Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, "Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter *them* over the city." And he went in as I watched.

3Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple[a] when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. 4Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and paused* over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's glory. 5And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard *even* in the outer court, like the voice of Almighty God when He speaks.

6Then it happened, when He commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, "Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim," that he went in and stood beside the wheels. 7And the cherub stretched out his hand from among the cherubim to the fire that *was* among the cherubim, and took *some of it* and put *it* into the hands of the *man* clothed with linen, who took *it* and went out. 8The cherubim appeared to have the form of a man's hand under their wings.

9And when I looked, there were four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel by one cherub and another wheel by each other cherub; the wheels appeared *to have* the color of a beryl stone. 10*As for* their appearance, all four looked alike—as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. 11When they went, they went toward *any of* their four directions; they did not turn aside when they went, but followed in the direction the head was facing. They did not turn aside when they went. 12And their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and the wheels that the four had, *were* full of eyes all around. 13As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, "Wheel."

14Each one had four faces: the first face *was* the face of a cherub, the second face the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. 15And the cherubim were lifted up. This *was* the living creature I saw by the River Chebar. 16When the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them; and when the cherubim lifted their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also did not turn from beside them. 17When *the cherubim*[a] stood still, *the wheels* stood still, and when *one*[b] was lifted up, *the other*[c] lifted itself up, for the spirit of the living creature *was* in them.

18Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. 19And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels *were* beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel *was* above them.

20This *is* the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the River Chebar, and I knew they *were* cherubim. 21Each one had four faces and each one four wings, and the likeness of the hands of a man *was* under their wings. 22And the likeness of their faces *was* the same *as* the faces which I had seen by the River Chebar, their appearance and their persons. They each went straight forward.

10:3 [a]Literally *house*, also in verses 4 and 18
10:17 [a]Literally *they* [b]Literally *they* [c]Literally *they*

Judgment on Wicked Counselors

11 Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the East Gate of the LORD's house, which faces eastward; and there at the door of the gate were twenty-five men, among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. [2]And He said to me: "Son of man, these *are* the men who devise iniquity and give wicked counsel in this city, [3]who say, '*The time is* not near to build houses; this *city is* the caldron, and we *are* the meat.' [4]Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man!"

[5]Then the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said to me, "Speak! 'Thus says the LORD: "Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind. [6]You have multiplied your slain in this city, and you have filled its streets with the slain." [7]Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Your slain whom you have laid in its midst, they *are* the meat, and this *city is* the caldron; but I shall bring you out of the midst of it. [8]You have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you," says the Lord GOD. [9]"And I will bring you out of its midst, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and execute judgments on you. [10]You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD. [11]This *city* shall not be your caldron, nor shall you be the meat in its midst. I will judge you at the border of Israel. [12]And you shall know that I *am* the LORD; for you have not walked in My statutes nor executed My judgments, but have done according to the customs of the Gentiles which *are* all around you." '"

[13]Now it happened, while I was prophesying, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice, and said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel?"

God Will Restore Israel

[14]Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [15]"Son of man, your brethren, your relatives, your countrymen, and all the house of Israel in its entirety, *are* those about whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Get far away from the LORD; this land has been given to us as a possession.' [16]Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone." ' [17]Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." ' [18]And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. [19]Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them,[a] and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, [20]that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. [21]But *as for those* whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

[22]So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel *was* high above them. [23]And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which *is* on the east side of the city.

[24]Then the Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea,[a] to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me. [25]So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the LORD had shown me.

Judah's Captivity Portrayed

12 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying: [2]"Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they *are* a rebellious house.

[3]"Therefore, son of man, prepare your belongings for captivity, and go into captivity by day in their sight. You shall go from your place into captivity to another place in their sight. It may be that they will consider, though they *are* a rebellious house. [4]By day you shall bring out your belongings in their sight, as though going

11:19 [a]Literally *you* **11:24** [a]Or *Babylon,* and so elsewhere in this book

into captivity; and at evening you shall go in their sight, like those who go into captivity. 5Dig through the wall in their sight, and carry *your belongings* out through it. 6In their sight you shall bear *them* on *your* shoulders *and* carry *them* out at twilight; you shall cover your face, so that you cannot see the ground, for I have made you a sign to the house of Israel."

7So I did as I was commanded. I brought out my belongings by day, as though going into captivity, and at evening I dug through the wall with my hand. I brought *them* out at twilight, *and* I bore *them* on *my* shoulder in their sight.

8And in the morning the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9"Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, 'What are you doing?' 10Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "This burden *concerns* the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are among them." ' 11Say, 'I *am* a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall be carried away into captivity.' 12And the prince who *is* among them shall bear *his belongings* on *his* shoulder at twilight and go out. They shall dig through the wall to carry *them* out through it. He shall cover his face, so that he cannot see the ground with *his* eyes. 13I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, *to* the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there. 14I will scatter to every wind all who *are* around him to help him, and all his troops; and I will draw out the sword after them.

15"Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. 16But I will spare a few of their men from the sword, from famine, and from pestilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the Gentiles wherever they go. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD."



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life. | EZEKIEL 13:22

David was told to hide in the bushes until He heard the angels in the tops of the trees. God seemed to be saying, "Do not go after the enemy until you are certain I am going after the enemy. If you attack before I am with you, you will lose." We must not try to deal with sin in our own lives until we are certain the Lord is dealing with it. The Ezekiel passage is taking the same truth, but applying it to others. I must not try to deal with the sin in someone else's life until I am sure the Lord is dealing with that sin. This passage speaks about making the righteous sad when God has not made them sad. Another translation says, "You disheartened the righteous with falsehood when I did not cause him grief." We need the wisdom of the Lord when we deal with our own or another's sin. We must not comfort those whom God is not comforting; we must not convict those whom God is not convicting.

Judgment Not Postponed

17 Moreover the word of the LORD came
to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, eat your bread
with quaking, and drink your water with
trembling and anxiety. 19 And say to the
people of the land, 'Thus says the Lord GOD
to the inhabitants of Jerusalem *and* to the
land of Israel: "They shall eat their bread
with anxiety, and drink their water with
dread, so that her land may be emptied of
all who are in it, because of the violence of
all those who dwell in it. 20 Then the cities
that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and
the land shall become desolate; and you
shall know that I *am* the LORD." '"

21 And the word of the LORD came to me,
saying, 22 "Son of man, what *is* this proverb
that you *people* have about the land of Israel,
which says, 'The days are prolonged, and
every vision fails'? 23 Tell them therefore,
'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will lay this prov-
erb to rest, and they shall no more use it as
a proverb in Israel." ' But say to them, ' "The
days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every
vision. 24 For no more shall there be any false
vision or flattering divination within the
house of Israel. 25 For I *am* the LORD. I speak,
and the word which I speak will come to
pass; it will no more be postponed; for in
your days, O rebellious house, I will say the
word and perform it," says the Lord GOD.'"

26 Again the word of the LORD came to
me, saying, 27 "Son of man, look, the house
of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees *is*
for many days *from now,* and he prophesies of
times far off.' 28 Therefore say to them, 'Thus
says the Lord GOD: "None of My words will
be postponed any more, but the word which
I speak will be done," says the Lord GOD.'"

Woe to Foolish Prophets

13 And the word of the LORD came to
me, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy
against the prophets of Israel who prophesy,
and say to those who prophesy out of their
own heart, 'Hear the word of the LORD!'"

3 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the
foolish prophets, who follow their own
spirit and have seen nothing! 4 O Israel,
your prophets are like foxes in the deserts.
5 You have not gone up into the gaps to
build a wall for the house of Israel to stand
in battle on the day of the LORD. 6 They
have envisioned futility and false divina-
tion, saying, 'Thus says the LORD!' But the
LORD has not sent them; yet they hope that
the word may be confirmed. 7 Have you
not seen a futile vision, and have you not
spoken false divination? You say, 'The LORD
says,' but I have not spoken."

8 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
"Because you have spoken nonsense and
envisioned lies, therefore I *am* indeed
against you," says the Lord GOD. 9 "My hand
will be against the prophets who envision
futility and who divine lies; they shall not be
in the assembly of My people, nor be writ-
ten in the record of the house of Israel, nor
shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then
you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

10 "Because, indeed, because they have
seduced My people, saying, 'Peace!' when
there is no peace—and one builds a wall,
and they plaster it with untempered *mor-
tar*— 11 say to those who plaster *it* with
untempered *mortar,* that it will fall. There
will be flooding rain, and you, O great hail-
stones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall
tear *it* down. 12 Surely, when the wall has
fallen, will it not be said to you, 'Where *is*
the mortar with which you plastered *it?*'"

13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I
will cause a stormy wind to break forth in
My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain
in My anger, and great hailstones in fury
to consume *it.* 14 So I will break down the
wall you have plastered with untempered
mortar, and bring it down to the ground,
so that its foundation will be uncovered; it
will fall, and you shall be consumed in the
midst of it. Then you shall know that I *am*
the LORD.

15 "Thus will I accomplish My wrath on
the wall and on those who have plastered
it with untempered *mortar;* and I will say
to you, 'The wall *is* no *more,* nor those who
plastered it, 16 *that is,* the prophets of Israel
who prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and
who see visions of peace for her when *there
is* no peace,'" says the Lord GOD.

17 "Likewise, son of man, set your face
against the daughters of your people, who
prophesy out of their own heart; prophesy
against them, 18 and say, 'Thus says the Lord
GOD: "Woe to the *women* who sew *magic*

charms on their sleeves[a] and make veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you hunt the souls of My people, and keep yourselves alive? 19And will you profane Me among My people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies?"

20"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against your *magic* charms by which you hunt souls there like birds. I will tear them from your arms, and let the souls go, the souls you hunt like birds. 21I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people out of your hand, and they shall no longer be as prey in your hand. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

22"Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life. 23Therefore you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD." '"

Idolatry Will Be Punished

14 Now some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. 2And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 3"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?

4"Therefore speak to them, and say to

13:18 [a]Literally *over all the joints of My hands;* Vulgate reads *under every elbow;* Septuagint and Targum read *on all elbows of the hands.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Indeed, when it was whole, no object could be made from it. How much less will it be useful for any work when the fire has devoured it, and it is burned?" | EZEKIEL 15:5

John 15 and Ezekiel 15 should be studied together. They are both chapters about the vine. Ezekiel takes us behind the scenes and tells us why the Lord chose the vine to illustrate His people. It was because in the natural, the vine was worthless wood. No one builds anything from the wood of a vine. Unless one is making a wreath or a whistle, vine wood is useless. God desired that His people realize that they were just like the vine. Worthless without Him! But they became proud and boasted of the vine. They gloried in the fact that they were God's chosen vine. Ezekiel the prophet unveils the heart of God. He says, "You have not seen yourself as a worthless vine, therefore I am going to take you into captivity. You will be burned to a cinder. If you did not get the point when God called you a vine, perhaps you will get the point if you are a burned-out vine!" This passage is very real to me because the Lord took me on this path. I was among those who had to "be badly burned" before I got the point. In fact, I was one of His many children that actually "burned out." Now I know I am a branch in the true Vine, and without Him I can do nothing.

them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, 5that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols." '

6"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations. 7For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, then comes to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the LORD will answer him by Myself. 8I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of My people. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

9"And if the prophet is induced to speak anything, I the LORD have induced that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel. 10And they shall bear their iniquity; the punishment of the prophet shall be the same as the punishment of the one who inquired, 11that the house of Israel may no longer stray from Me, nor be profaned anymore with all their transgressions, but that they may be My people and I may be their God," says the Lord GOD.'"

Judgment on Persistent Unfaithfulness

12The word of the LORD came again to me, saying: 13"Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. 14Even *if* these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver *only* themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord GOD.

15"If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they empty it, and make it so desolate that no man may pass through because of the beasts, 16*even though* these three men *were* in it, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; only they would be delivered, and the land would be desolate.

17"Or *if* I bring a sword on that land, and say, 'Sword, go through the land,' and I cut off man and beast from it, 18even *though* these three men *were* in it, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but only they themselves would be delivered.

19"Or *if* I send a pestilence into that land and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, 20even *though* Noah, Daniel, and Job *were* in it, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver *only* themselves by their righteousness."

21For thus says the Lord GOD: "How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it? 22Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, *both* sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. 23And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have done nothing without cause that I have done in it," says the Lord GOD.

The Outcast Vine

15 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 2"Son of man, how is the wood of the vine *better* than any other wood, the vine branch which is among the trees of the forest? 3Is wood taken from it to make any object? Or can *men* make a peg from it to hang any vessel on? 4Instead, it is thrown into the fire for fuel; the fire devours both ends of it, and its middle is burned. Is it useful for *any* work? 5Indeed, when it was whole, no object could be made from it. How much less will it be useful for *any* work when the fire has devoured it, and it is burned?

6"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so I will give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 7and I will set My face against

them. They will go out from *one* fire, but *another* fire shall devour them. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I set My face against them. 8Thus I will make the land desolate, because they have persisted in unfaithfulness,' says the Lord GOD."

God's Love for Jerusalem

16 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 3and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: "Your birth and your nativity *are* from the land of Canaan; your father *was* an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 4*As for* your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse *you;* you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. 5No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.

6"And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' 7I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. *Your* breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you *were* naked and bare.

8"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time *was* the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.

9"Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. 10I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. 12And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing *was of* fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate *pastry of* fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. 14Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it *was* perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD.

Jerusalem's Harlotry

15"But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who *would have* it. 16You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. *Such* things should not happen, nor be. 17You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them. 18You took your embroidered garments and covered them, and you set My oil and My incense before them. 19Also My food which I gave you—the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey *which* I fed you—you set it before them as sweet incense; and *so* it was," says the Lord GOD.

20"Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. *Were* your *acts* of harlotry a small matter, 21that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through *the fire?* 22And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.

23"Then it was so, after all your wickedness—'Woe, woe to you!' says the Lord GOD— 24*that* you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street. 25You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry. 26You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger.

27"Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior. 28You also played the harlot with

the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. 29Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied.

30"How degenerate is your heart!" says the Lord GOD, "seeing you do all these *things,* the deeds of a brazen harlot.

Jerusalem's Adultery

31"You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned payment. 32*You are* an adulterous wife, *who* takes strangers instead of her husband. 33Men make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers, and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry. 34You are the opposite of *other* women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite."

Jerusalem's Lovers Will Abuse Her

35'Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD! 36Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them, 37surely, therefore, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, *and* all those you hated; I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness. 38And I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. 39I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare.

40"They shall also bring up an assembly against you, and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords. 41They shall burn your houses with fire, and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will make you cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers. 42So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet, and be angry no more. 43Because you did not remember the days of your youth, but agitated Me[a] with all these *things,* surely I will also recompense your deeds on *your own* head," says the Lord GOD. "And you shall not commit lewdness in addition to all your abominations.

More Wicked than Samaria and Sodom

44"Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use *this* proverb against you: 'Like mother, like daughter!' 45You *are* your mother's daughter, loathing husband and children; and you *are* the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother *was* a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

46"Your elder sister *is* Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who dwells to the south of you, *is* Sodom and her daughters. 47You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as *if that were* too little, you became more corrupt than they in all your ways.

48"*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. 49Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw *fit.*[a]

51"Samaria did not commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and have justified your sisters by all the abominations which you have done. 52You who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also, because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs; they are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame, because you justified your sisters.

16:43 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *were agitated with Me.* **16:50** [a]Vulgate reads *you saw;* Septuagint reads *he saw;* Targum reads *as was revealed to Me.*

53"When I bring back their captives, the
captives of Sodom and her daughters, and the
captives of Samaria and her daughters, then
I will also bring back the captives of your cap-
tivity among them, 54that you may bear your
own shame and be disgraced by all that you
did when you comforted them. 55When your
sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to
their former state, and Samaria and her
daughters return to their former state, then
you and your daughters will return to your
former state. 56For your sister Sodom was not
a byword in your mouth in the days of your
pride, 57before your wickedness was uncov-
ered. It was like the time of the reproach of
the daughters of Syria[a] and all *those*
around her, and of the daughters of the Philistines,
who despise you everywhere. 58You have paid
for your lewdness and your abominations,"
says the LORD. 59For thus says the Lord GOD:
"I will deal with you as you have done, who
despised the oath by breaking the covenant.

An Everlasting Covenant

60"Nevertheless I will remember My cov-
enant with you in the days of your youth,
and I will establish an everlasting covenant
with you. 61Then you will remember your
ways and be ashamed, when you receive
your older and your younger sisters; for I
will give them to you for daughters, but not
because of My covenant with you. 62And I
will establish My covenant with you. Then
you shall know that I *am* the LORD, 63that you
may remember and be ashamed, and never
open your mouth anymore because of your
shame, when I provide you an atonement
for all you have done," says the Lord GOD.'"

The Eagles and the Vine

17 And the word of the LORD came to
me, saying, 2"Son of man, pose a
riddle, and speak a parable to the house
of Israel, 3and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"A great eagle with large wings and
long pinions,
Full of feathers of various colors,
Came to Lebanon
And took from the cedar the highest
branch.
4 He cropped off its topmost young twig
And carried it to a land of trade;
He set it in a city of merchants.
5 Then he took some of the seed of
the land
And planted it in a fertile field;
He placed *it* by abundant waters
And set it like a willow tree.
6 And it grew and became a spreading
vine of low stature;
Its branches turned toward him,
But its roots were under it.
So it became a vine,
Brought forth branches,
And put forth shoots.

7 "But there was another[a] great eagle
with large wings and many feathers;
And behold, this vine bent its roots
toward him,
And stretched its branches toward him,
From the garden terrace where it had
been planted,
That he might water it.
8 It was planted in good soil by many
waters,
To bring forth branches, bear fruit,
And become a majestic vine." '

9"Say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Will it thrive?
Will he not pull up its roots,
Cut off its fruit,
And leave it to wither?
All of its spring leaves will wither,
And no great power or many people
Will be needed to pluck it up by
its roots.
10 Behold, *it is* planted,
Will it thrive?
Will it not utterly wither when the east
wind touches it?
It will wither in the garden terrace
where it grew." '"

11Moreover the word of the LORD came
to me, saying, 12"Say now to the rebellious
house: 'Do you not know what these *things
mean?*' Tell *them,* 'Indeed the king of Babylon
went to Jerusalem and took its king and
princes, and led them with him to Babylon.
13And he took the king's offspring, made

16:57 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *Edom.* **17:7** [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text and Targum read *one.*

a covenant with him, and put him under oath. He also took away the mighty of the land, 14that the kingdom might be brought low and not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping his covenant it might stand. 15But he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and many people. Will he prosper? Will he who does such *things* escape? Can he break a covenant and still be delivered?

16'*As* I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely in the place *where* the king *dwells* who made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke—with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. 17Nor will Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company do anything in the war, when they heap up a siege mound and build a wall to cut off many persons. 18Since he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, and in fact gave his hand and still did all these *things*, he shall not escape.'"

19Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "*As* I live, surely My oath which he despised, and My covenant which he broke, I will recompense on his own head. 20I will spread My net over him, and he shall be taken in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon and try him there for the treason which he committed against Me. 21All his fugitives[a] with all his troops shall fall by the sword, and those who remain shall be scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken."

Israel Exalted at Last

22Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will take also *one* of the highest branches of the high cedar and set *it* out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant *it* on a high and prominent mountain. 23On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. 24And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done *it*."

A False Proverb Refuted

18 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 2"What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying:

'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge'?

3"*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel.

4 "Behold, all souls are Mine;
The soul of the father
As well as the soul of the son is Mine;
The soul who sins shall die.
5 But if a man is just
And does what is lawful and right;
6 If he has not eaten on the mountains,
Nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel,
Nor defiled his neighbor's wife,
Nor approached a woman during her impurity;
7 If he has not oppressed anyone,
But has restored to the debtor his pledge;
Has robbed no one by violence,
But has given his bread to the hungry
And covered the naked with clothing;
8 If he has not exacted usury
Nor taken any increase,
But has withdrawn his hand from iniquity
And executed true judgment between man and man;

17:21 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *choice men;* Targum reads *mighty men;* Septuagint omits *All his fugitives.*



9 *If* he has walked in My statutes
And kept My judgments faithfully—
He *is* just;
He shall surely live!"
Says the Lord GOD.

10 "If he begets a son *who is* a robber
Or a shedder of blood,
Who does any of these *things*
11 And does none of those *duties,*
But has eaten on the mountains
Or defiled his neighbor's wife;
12 If he has oppressed the poor and needy,
Robbed by violence,
Not restored the pledge,
Lifted his eyes to the idols,
Or committed abomination;
13 If he has exacted usury
Or taken increase—
Shall he then live?
He shall not live!
If he has done any of these abominations,
He shall surely die;
His blood shall be upon him.

14 "*If,* however, he begets a son
Who sees all the sins which his father has done,
And considers but does not do likewise;
15 *Who* has not eaten on the mountains,
Nor lifted his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel,
Nor defiled his neighbor's wife;
16 Has not oppressed anyone,
Nor withheld a pledge,
Nor robbed by violence,
But has given his bread to the hungry
And covered the naked with clothing;
17 *Who* has withdrawn his hand from the poor[a]
And not received usury or increase,
But has executed My judgments
And walked in My statutes—
He shall not die for the iniquity of his father;
He shall surely live!

18 "*As for* his father,
Because he cruelly oppressed,
Robbed his brother by violence,
And did what *is* not good among his people,
Behold, he shall die for his iniquity.

Turn and Live

19 "Yet you say, 'Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. 20 The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

21 "But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 22 None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. 23 Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "*and* not that he should turn from his ways and live?

24 "But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.

25 "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? 26 When a righteous *man* turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies. 27 Again, when a wicked *man* turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. 28 Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 29 Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My

18:17 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *iniquity* (compare verse 8).

ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair?

30"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. 31Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? 32For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!"

Israel Degraded

19 "Moreover take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, 2and say:

'What *is* your mother? A lioness:
She lay down among the lions;
Among the young lions she nourished her cubs.
3 She brought up one of her cubs,
And he became a young lion;
He learned to catch prey,
And he devoured men.
4 The nations also heard of him;
He was trapped in their pit,
And they brought him with chains to the land of Egypt.

5 'When she saw that she waited, *that* her hope was lost,
She took another of her cubs *and* made him a young lion.
6 He roved among the lions,
And became a young lion;
He learned to catch prey;
He devoured men.
7 He knew their desolate places,[a]
And laid waste their cities;
The land with its fullness was desolated
By the noise of his roaring.
8 Then the nations set against him from the provinces on every side,
And spread their net over him;
He was trapped in their pit.
9 They put him in a cage with chains,
And brought him to the king of Babylon;
They brought him in nets,
That his voice should no longer be heard on the mountains of Israel.
10 'Your mother *was* like a vine in your bloodline,[a]
Planted by the waters,
Fruitful and full of branches
Because of many waters.
11 She had strong branches for scepters of rulers.
She towered in stature above the thick branches,
And was seen in her height amid the dense foliage.
12 But she was plucked up in fury,
She was cast down to the ground,
And the east wind dried her fruit.
Her strong branches were broken and withered;
The fire consumed them.
13 And now she *is* planted in the wilderness,
In a dry and thirsty land.
14 Fire has come out from a rod of her branches
And devoured her fruit,
So that she has no strong branch—
a scepter for ruling.'"

This *is* a lamentation, and has become a lamentation.

The Rebellions of Israel

20 It came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth *month,* on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me. 2Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 3"Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Have you come to inquire of Me? *As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "I will not be inquired of by you." ' 4Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge *them?* Then make known to them the abominations of their fathers.

5"Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, 'I *am* the LORD your God.' 6On that day I raised My hand in an oath to them, to bring them out

19:7 [a]Septuagint reads *He stood in insolence;* Targum reads *He destroyed its palaces;* Vulgate reads *He learned to make widows.* **19:10** [a]Literally *blood,* following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *like a flower on a pomegranate tree;* Targum reads *in your likeness.*

of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, 'flowing with milk and honey,'[a] the glory of all lands. 7Then I said to them, 'Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I *am* the LORD your God.' 8But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, 'I will pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.' 9But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they *were,* in whose sight I had made Myself known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

10"Therefore I made them go out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. 11And I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, 'which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them.'[a] 12Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies them. 13Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, 'which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them';[a] and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them. 14But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 15So I also raised My hand in an oath to them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them,* 'flowing with milk and honey,'[a] the glory of all lands, 16because they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes, but profaned My Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols. 17Nevertheless My eye spared them from destruction. I did not make an end of them in the wilderness.

18"But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. 19I *am* the LORD your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; 20hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God.'

21"Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, 'which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them';[a] but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness. 22Nevertheless I withdrew My hand and acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 23Also I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries, 24because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols.

25"Therefore I also gave them up to statutes *that were* not good, and judgments by which they could not live; 26and I pronounced them unclean because of their ritual gifts, in that they caused all their firstborn to pass through *the fire,* that I might make them desolate and that they might know that I am the LORD." '

27"Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "In this too your fathers have blasphemed Me, by being unfaithful to Me. 28When I brought them into the land *concerning* which I had raised My hand in an oath to give them, and they saw all the high hills and all the thick trees, there they offered their sacrifices and provoked Me with their offerings. There they also sent up their sweet aroma and poured out their drink offerings. 29Then I said to them, 'What *is* this high place to which you go?' So its name is called Bamah[a] to this day." '

30Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Are you defiling yourselves in the manner of your fathers, and committing harlotry according to their abominations? 31For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? *As* I live," says

20:6 [a]Exodus 3:8 **20:11** [a]Leviticus 18:5 **20:13** [a]Leviticus 18:5
20:15 [a]Exodus 3:8 **20:21** [a]Leviticus 18:5 **20:29** [a]Literally *High Place*

the Lord GOD, "I will not be inquired of by you. 32What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, 'We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.'

God Will Restore Israel

33"*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. 34I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. 36Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says the Lord GOD.

37"I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I *am* the LORD.

39"As for you, O house of Israel," thus says the Lord GOD: "Go, serve every one of you his idols—and hereafter—if you will not obey Me; but profane My holy name no more with your gifts and your idols. 40For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things. 41I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. 42Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country *for* which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. 43And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. 44Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel," says the Lord GOD.'"

Fire in the Forest

45Furthermore the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 46"Son of man, set your face toward the south; preach against the south and prophesy against the forest land, the South,[a] 47and say to the forest of the South, 'Hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree and every dry tree in you; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be scorched by it. 48All flesh shall see that I, the LORD, have kindled it; it shall not be quenched." '"

49Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! They say of me, 'Does he not speak parables?'"

Babylon, the Sword of God

21 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, preach against the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel; 3and say to the land of Israel, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I *am* against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you. 4Because I will cut off both righteous and wicked from you, therefore My sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from south *to* north, 5that all flesh may know that I, the LORD, have drawn My sword out of its sheath; it shall not return anymore." ' 6Sigh therefore, son of man, with a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. 7And it shall be when they say to you, 'Why are you sighing?' that you shall answer, 'Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak *as* water. Behold, it is coming and shall be brought to pass,' says the Lord GOD."

8Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9"Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD!' Say:

'A sword, a sword is sharpened
And also polished!

20:46 [a]Hebrew *Negev*

10 Sharpened to make a dreadful slaughter,
Polished to flash like lightning!
Should we then make mirth?
It despises the scepter of My son,
As it does all wood.
11 And He has given it to be polished,
That it may be handled;
This sword is sharpened, and it is
polished
To be given into the hand of the slayer.'

12 "Cry and wail, son of man;
For it will be against My people,
Against all the princes of Israel.
Terrors including the sword will be
against My people;
Therefore strike *your* thigh.

13 "Because *it is* a testing,
And what if *the sword* despises even
the scepter?
The scepter shall be no *more,*"

says the Lord GOD.

14 "You therefore, son of man, prophesy,
And strike *your* hands together.
The third time let the sword do double
damage.
It *is* the sword *that* slays,
The sword that slays the great *men,*
That enters their private chambers.
15 I have set the point of the sword
against all their gates,
That the heart may melt and many
may stumble.
Ah! *It is* made bright;
It is grasped for slaughter:

16 "Swords at the ready!
Thrust right!
Set your blade!
Thrust left—
Wherever your edge is ordered!

17 "I also will beat My fists together,
And I will cause My fury to rest;
I, the LORD, have spoken."

18 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying: 19 "And son of man, appoint for yourself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go; both of them shall go from the same land. Make a sign; put *it* at the head of the road to the city. 20 Appoint a road for the sword to go to Rabbah of the Ammonites, and to Judah, into fortified Jerusalem. 21 For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. 22 In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to lift the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a *siege* mound, and to build a wall. 23 And it will be to them like a false divination in the eyes of those who have sworn oaths with them; but he will bring their iniquity to remembrance, that they may be taken.

24 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins appear—because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in hand.

25 'Now to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose iniquity *shall* end, 26 thus says the Lord GOD:

"Remove the turban, and take off
the crown;
Nothing *shall remain* the same.
Exalt the humble, and humble the
exalted.
27 Overthrown, overthrown,
I will make it overthrown!
It shall be no *longer,*
Until He comes whose right it is,
And I will give it *to Him.*" '

Our worship must be directed to the One who holds the world in His hands.
BILLY GRAHAM

A Sword Against the Ammonites

28 "And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach,' and say:

'A sword, a sword *is* drawn,
Polished for slaughter,
For consuming, for flashing—
29 While they see false visions for you,

While they divine a lie to you,
To bring you on the necks of the wicked, the slain
Whose day has come,
Whose iniquity *shall* end.

30 'Return *it* to its sheath.
I will judge you
In the place where you were created,
In the land of your nativity.
31 I will pour out My indignation on you;
I will blow against you with the fire of My wrath,
And deliver you into the hands of brutal men *who are* skillful to destroy.
32 You shall be fuel for the fire;
Your blood shall be in the midst of the land.
You shall not be remembered,
For I the LORD have spoken.'"

Sins of Jerusalem

22 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Now, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Yes, show her all her abominations! 3Then say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "The city sheds blood in her own midst, that her time may come; and she makes idols within herself to defile herself. 4You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and have defiled yourself with the idols which you have made. You have caused your days to draw near, and have come to *the end of* your years; therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations, and a mockery to all countries. 5*Those* near and *those* far from you will mock you as infamous *and* full of tumult.

6"Look, the princes of Israel: each one has used his power to shed blood in you. 7In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow. 8You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. 9In you are men who slander to cause bloodshed; in you are those who eat on the mountains; in your midst they commit lewdness. 10In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they violate women who are set apart during their impurity. 11One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; and another in you violates his sister, his father's daughter. 12In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbors by extortion, and have forgotten Me," says the Lord GOD.

13"Behold, therefore, I beat My fists at the dishonest profit which you have made, and at the bloodshed which has been in your midst. 14Can your heart endure, or can your hands remain strong, in the days when I shall deal with you? I, the LORD, have spoken, and will do *it*. 15I will scatter you among the nations, disperse you throughout the countries, and remove your filthiness completely from you. 16You shall defile yourself in the sight of the nations; then you shall know that I *am* the LORD." '"

Israel in the Furnace

17The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 18"Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they *are* all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver. 19Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20*As men* gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt *it;* so I will gather *you* in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave *you there* and melt you. 21Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst. 22As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have poured out My fury on you.'"

Israel's Wicked Leaders

23And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 24"Son of man, say to her: 'You *are* a land that is not cleansed[a] or rained on in the day of indignation.' 25The conspiracy of her prophets[a] in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured people; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. 26Her priests have violated

22:24 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *showered upon.* **22:25** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *princes;* Targum reads *scribes.*

My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known *the difference* between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. 27Her princes in her midst *are* like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy people, and to get dishonest gain. 28Her prophets plastered them with untempered *mortar,* seeing false visions, and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD had not spoken. 29The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. 30So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. 31Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

Two Harlot Sisters

23 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying:

2 "Son of man, there were two women,
The daughters of one mother.
3 They committed harlotry in Egypt,
They committed harlotry in their youth;
Their breasts were there embraced,
Their virgin bosom was there pressed.
4 Their names: Oholah[a] the elder and
Oholibah[b] her sister;
They were Mine,
And they bore sons and daughters.
As for their names,
Samaria *is* Oholah, and Jerusalem *is*
Oholibah.

The Older Sister, Samaria

5 "Oholah played the harlot even though
she was Mine;
And she lusted for her lovers, the
neighboring Assyrians,
6 *Who were* clothed in purple,
Captains and rulers,
All of them desirable young men,
Horsemen riding on horses.
7 Thus she committed her harlotry
with them,
All of them choice men of Assyria;
And with all for whom she lusted,
With all their idols, she defiled herself.
8 She has never given up her harlotry
brought from Egypt,
For in her youth they had lain with her,
Pressed her virgin bosom,
And poured out their immorality
upon her.

9 "Therefore I have delivered her
Into the hand of her lovers,
Into the hand of the Assyrians,
For whom she lusted.
10 They uncovered her nakedness,
Took away her sons and daughters,
And slew her with the sword;
She became a byword among women,
For they had executed judgment on her.

The Younger Sister, Jerusalem

11 "Now although her sister Oholibah saw *this,* she became more corrupt in her lust than she, and in her harlotry more corrupt than her sister's harlotry.

12 "She lusted for the neighboring
Assyrians,
Captains and rulers,
Clothed most gorgeously,
Horsemen riding on horses,
All of them desirable young men.
13 Then I saw that she was defiled;
Both *took* the same way.
14 But she increased her harlotry;
She looked at men portrayed on the wall,
Images of Chaldeans portrayed in
vermilion,
15 Girded with belts around their waists,
Flowing turbans on their heads,
All of them looking like captains,
In the manner of the Babylonians of
Chaldea,
The land of their nativity.
16 As soon as her eyes saw them,
She lusted for them
And sent messengers to them in Chaldea.

17 "Then the Babylonians came to her,
into the bed of love,

23:4 [a]Literally *Her Own Tabernacle* [b]Literally *My Tabernacle Is in Her*

And they defiled her with their
immorality;
So she was defiled by them, and
alienated herself from them.
18 She revealed her harlotry and
uncovered her nakedness.
Then I alienated Myself from her,
As I had alienated Myself from
her sister.

19 "Yet she multiplied her harlotry
In calling to remembrance the days of
her youth,
When she had played the harlot in the
land of Egypt.
20 For she lusted for her paramours,
Whose flesh *is like* the flesh of donkeys,
And whose issue *is like* the issue of
horses.
21 Thus you called to remembrance the
lewdness of your youth,
When the Egyptians pressed your bosom
Because of your youthful breasts.

Judgment on Jerusalem

22 "Therefore, Oholibah, thus says the
Lord GOD:

'Behold, I will stir up your lovers
against you,
From whom you have alienated
yourself,
And I will bring them against you from
every side:
23 The Babylonians,
All the Chaldeans,
Pekod, Shoa, Koa,
All the Assyrians with them,
All of them desirable young men,
Governors and rulers,
Captains and men of renown,
All of them riding on horses.
24 And they shall come against you
With chariots, wagons, and war-horses,
With a horde of people.
They shall array against you
Buckler, shield, and helmet all around.

'I will delegate judgment to them,
And they shall judge you according to
their judgments.
25 I will set My jealousy against you,
And they shall deal furiously with you;
They shall remove your nose and your
ears,
And your remnant shall fall by the sword;
They shall take your sons and your
daughters,
And your remnant shall be devoured
by fire.
26 They shall also strip you of your clothes
And take away your beautiful jewelry.

27 'Thus I will make you cease your
lewdness and your harlotry
Brought from the land of Egypt,
So that you will not lift your eyes to
them,
Nor remember Egypt anymore.'

28 "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I
will deliver you into the hand of those you
hate, into the hand *of those* from whom you
alienated yourself. 29 They will deal hatefully
with you, take away all you have worked for,
and leave you naked and bare. The naked-
ness of your harlotry shall be uncovered,
both your lewdness and your harlotry. 30 I
will do these *things* to you because you have
gone as a harlot after the Gentiles, because
you have become defiled by their idols.
31 You have walked in the way of your sister;
therefore I will put her cup in your hand.'
32 "Thus says the Lord GOD:

'You shall drink of your sister's cup,
The deep and wide one;
You shall be laughed to scorn
And held in derision;
It contains much.
33 You will be filled with drunkenness
and sorrow,
The cup of horror and desolation,
The cup of your sister Samaria.
34 You shall drink and drain it,
You shall break its shards,
And tear at your own breasts;
For I have spoken,'
Says the Lord GOD.

35 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

'Because you have forgotten Me and
cast Me behind your back,
Therefore you shall bear the *penalty*
Of your lewdness and your harlotry.'"

Both Sisters Judged

36 The LORD also said to me: "Son of man,
will you judge Oholah and Oholibah?
Then declare to them their abominations.
37 For they have committed adultery, and
blood *is* on their hands. They have com-
mitted adultery with their idols, and even
sacrificed their sons whom they bore to Me,
passing them through *the fire,* to devour
them. 38 Moreover they have done this to
Me: They have defiled My sanctuary on the
same day and profaned My Sabbaths. 39 For
after they had slain their children for their
idols, on the same day they came into My
sanctuary to profane it; and indeed thus
they have done in the midst of My house.
40 "Furthermore you sent for men to
come from afar, to whom a messenger *was*
sent; and there they came. And you washed
yourself for them, painted your eyes, and
adorned yourself with ornaments. 41 You
sat on a stately couch, with a table pre-
pared before it, on which you had set My
incense and My oil. 42 The sound of a care-
free multitude *was* with her, and Sabeans
were brought from the wilderness with men
of the common sort, who put bracelets on
their wrists and beautiful crowns on their
heads. 43 Then I said concerning *her who
had grown* old in adulteries, 'Will they com-
mit harlotry with her now, and she *with
them?*' 44 Yet they went in to her, as men go
in to a woman who plays the harlot; thus
they went in to Oholah and Oholibah,
the lewd women. 45 But righteous men will
judge them after the manner of adulter-
esses, and after the manner of women who
shed blood, because they *are* adulteresses,
and blood *is* on their hands.
46 "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Bring
up an assembly against them, give them
up to trouble and plunder. 47 The assembly
shall stone them with stones and execute
them with their swords; they shall slay
their sons and their daughters, and burn
their houses with fire. 48 Thus I will cause
lewdness to cease from the land, that all
women may be taught not to practice your
lewdness. 49 They shall repay you for your
lewdness, and you shall pay for your idola-
trous sins. Then you shall know that I *am*
the Lord GOD.'"

Symbol of the Cooking Pot

24 Again, in the ninth year, in the
tenth month, on the tenth *day* of
the month, the word of the LORD came
to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, write down
the name of the day, this very day—the
king of Babylon started his siege against
Jerusalem this very day. 3 And utter a par-
able to the rebellious house, and say to
them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Put on a pot, set *it* on,
And also pour water into it.
4 Gather pieces *of meat* in it,
Every good piece,
The thigh and the shoulder.
Fill *it* with choice cuts;
5 Take the choice of the flock.
Also pile *fuel* bones under it,
Make it boil well,
And let the cuts simmer in it."

6 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Woe to the bloody city,
To the pot whose scum *is* in it,
And whose scum is not gone from it!
Bring it out piece by piece,
On which no lot has fallen.
7 For her blood is in her midst;
She set it on top of a rock;
She did not pour it on the ground,
To cover it with dust.
8 That it may raise up fury and take
vengeance,
I have set her blood on top of a rock,
That it may not be covered."

9 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Woe to the bloody city!
I too will make the pyre great.
10 Heap on the wood,
Kindle the fire;
Cook the meat well,
Mix in the spices,
And let the cuts be burned up.

11 "Then set the pot empty on the coals,
That it may become hot and its bronze
may burn,
That its filthiness may be melted in it,
That its scum may be consumed.
12 She has grown weary with lies,

And her great scum has not gone
from her.
Let her scum *be* in the fire!
13 In your filthiness *is* lewdness.
Because I have cleansed you, and you
were not cleansed,
You will not be cleansed of your
filthiness anymore,
Till I have caused My fury to rest
upon you.
14 I, the LORD, have spoken *it;*
It shall come to pass, and I will do *it;*
I will not hold back,
Nor will I spare,
Nor will I relent;
According to your ways
And according to your deeds
They[a] will judge you,"
Says the Lord GOD.'"

The Prophet's Wife Dies

15 Also the word of the LORD came to me,
saying, 16 "Son of man, behold, I take away
from you the desire of your eyes with one
stroke; yet you shall neither mourn nor
weep, nor shall your tears run down. 17 Sigh
in silence, make no mourning for the dead;
bind your turban on your head, and put
your sandals on your feet; do not cover *your*
lips, and do not eat man's bread *of sorrow.*"
18 So I spoke to the people in the morn-
ing, and at evening my wife died; and the
next morning I did as I was commanded.
19 And the people said to me, "Will you
not tell us what these *things signify* to us,
that you behave so?"
20 Then I answered them, "The word of
the LORD came to me, saying, 21 'Speak to the
house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD:
'Behold, I will profane My sanctuary, your
arrogant boast, the desire of your eyes, the
delight of your soul; and your sons and
daughters whom you left behind shall fall
by the sword. 22 And you shall do as I have
done; you shall not cover *your* lips nor eat
man's bread *of sorrow.* 23 Your turbans shall
be on your heads and your sandals on your
feet; you shall neither mourn nor weep, but
you shall pine away in your iniquities and
mourn with one another. 24 Thus Ezekiel is
a sign to you; according to all that he has
done you shall do; and when this comes,
you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.'"

25 'And you, son of man—*will it* not *be* in
the day when I take from them their strong-
hold, their joy and their glory, the desire of
their eyes, and that on which they set their
minds, their sons and their daughters: 26 *that*
on that day one who escapes will come to
you to let *you* hear *it* with *your* ears? 27 On that
day your mouth will be opened to him who
has escaped; you shall speak and no longer
be mute. Thus you will be a sign to them,
and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"

Proclamation Against Ammon

25 The word of the LORD came to me,
saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face
against the Ammonites, and prophesy
against them. 3 Say to the Ammonites, 'Hear
the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the
Lord GOD: "Because you said, 'Aha!' against
My sanctuary when it was profaned, and
against the land of Israel when it was deso-
late, and against the house of Judah when
they went into captivity, 4 indeed, there-
fore, I will deliver you as a possession to
the men of the East, and they shall set
their encampments among you and make
their dwellings among you; they shall eat
your fruit, and they shall drink your milk.
5 And I will make Rabbah a stable for cam-
els and Ammon a resting place for flocks.
Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD."
6 'For thus says the Lord GOD: "Because
you clapped *your* hands, stamped your feet,
and rejoiced in heart with all your disdain
for the land of Israel, 7 indeed, therefore, I
will stretch out My hand against you, and
give you as plunder to the nations; I will
cut you off from the peoples, and I will
cause you to perish from the countries; I
will destroy you, and you shall know that I
am the LORD."

Proclamation Against Moab

8 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because
Moab and Seir say, 'Look! The house of
Judah *is* like all the nations,' 9 therefore,
behold, I will clear the territory of Moab of
cities, of the cities on its frontier, the glory
of the country, Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon,
and Kirjathaim. 10 To the men of the East I
will give it as a possession, together with
the Ammonites, that the Ammonites may

24:14 [a] Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *I.*

not be remembered among the nations. 11And I will execute judgments upon Moab, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD."

Proclamation Against Edom

12"Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because of what Edom did against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has greatly offended by avenging itself on them," 13therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I will also stretch out My hand against Edom, cut off man and beast from it, and make it desolate from Teman; Dedan shall fall by the sword. 14I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel, that they may do in Edom according to My anger and according to My fury; and they shall know My vengeance," says the Lord GOD.

Proclamation Against Philistia

15"Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because the Philistines dealt vengefully and took vengeance with a spiteful heart, to destroy because of the old hatred," 16therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I will stretch out My hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the remnant of the seacoast. 17I will execute great vengeance on them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I lay My vengeance upon them." '"

Proclamation Against Tyre

26 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, 'Aha! She is broken who *was* the gateway of the peoples; now she is turned over to me; I shall be filled; she is laid waste.'

3"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I *am* against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. 4And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. 5It shall be *a place for* spreading nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,' says the Lord GOD; 'it shall become plunder for the nations. 6Also her daughter *villages* which *are* in the fields shall be slain by the sword. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.'

7"For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar[a] king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. 8He will slay with the sword your daughter *villages* in the fields; he will heap up a siege mound against you, build a wall against you, and raise a defense against you. 9He will direct his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. 10Because of the abundance of his horses, their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen, the wagons, and the chariots, when he enters your gates, as men enter a city that has been breached. 11With the hooves of his horses he will trample all your streets; he will slay your people by the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. 12They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water. 13I will put an end to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more. 14I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be *a place for* spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken,' says the Lord GOD.

15"Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre: 'Will the coastlands not shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded cry, when slaughter is made in the midst of you? 16Then all the princes of the sea will come down from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and take off their embroidered garments; they will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground, tremble *every* moment, and be astonished at you. 17And they will take up a lamentation for you, and say to you:

"How you have perished,
O one inhabited by seafaring men,
O renowned city,
Who was strong at sea,
She and her inhabitants,
Who caused their terror *to be* on all

26:7 [a]Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* and so elsewhere in this book

her inhabitants!
18 Now the coastlands tremble on the day
of your fall;
Yes, the coastlands by the sea are
troubled at your departure." '

19"For thus says the Lord GOD: 'When I make you a desolate city, like cities that are not inhabited, when I bring the deep upon you, and great waters cover you, 20then I will bring you down with those who descend into the Pit, to the people of old, and I will make you dwell in the lowest part of the earth, in places desolate from antiquity, with those who go down to the Pit, so that you may never be inhabited; and I shall establish glory in the land of the living. 21I will make you a terror, and you *shall be* no *more;* though you are sought for, you will never be found again,' says the Lord GOD."

Lamentation for Tyre

27 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 2"Now, son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyre, 3and say to Tyre, 'You who are situated at the entrance of the sea, merchant of the peoples on many coastlands, thus says the Lord GOD:

"O Tyre, you have said,
'I *am* perfect in beauty.'
4 Your borders *are* in the midst of the seas.
Your builders have perfected your
beauty.
5 They made all *your* planks of fir trees
from Senir;
They took a cedar from Lebanon to
make you a mast.
6 *Of* oaks from Bashan they made your
oars;
The company of Ashurites have inlaid
your planks
With ivory from the coasts of Cyprus.[a]
7 Fine embroidered linen from Egypt
was what you spread for your sail;
Blue and purple from the coasts of
Elishah was what covered you.

8 "Inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad were
your oarsmen;
Your wise men, O Tyre, were in you;
They became your pilots.
9 Elders of Gebal and its wise men
Were in you to caulk your seams;
All the ships of the sea
And their oarsmen were in you
To market your merchandise.

10 "Those from Persia, Lydia,[a] and Libya[b]
Were in your army as men of war;
They hung shield and helmet in you;
They gave splendor to you.
11 Men of Arvad with your army *were* on
your walls *all* around,
And the men of Gammad were in your
towers;
They hung their shields on your walls
all around;
They made your beauty perfect.

12"Tarshish *was* your merchant because of your many luxury goods. They gave you silver, iron, tin, and lead for your goods. 13Javan, Tubal, and Meshech *were* your traders. They bartered human lives and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. 14Those from the house of Togarmah traded for your wares with horses, steeds, and mules. 15The men of Dedan *were* your traders; many isles *were* the market of your hand. They brought you ivory tusks and ebony as payment. 16Syria *was* your merchant because of the abundance of goods you made. They gave you for your wares emeralds, purple, embroidery, fine linen, corals, and rubies. 17Judah and the land of Israel *were* your traders. They traded for your merchandise wheat of Minnith, millet, honey, oil, and balm. 18Damascus *was* your merchant because of the abundance of goods you made, because of your many luxury items, with the wine of Helbon and with white wool. 19Dan and Javan paid for your wares, traversing back and forth. Wrought iron, cassia, and cane were among your merchandise. 20Dedan *was* your merchant in saddlecloths for riding. 21Arabia and all the princes of Kedar *were* your regular merchants. They traded with you in lambs, rams, and goats. 22The merchants of Sheba and Raamah *were* your merchants. They traded for your wares the choicest spices, all kinds of precious stones, and gold. 23Haran, Canneh, Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Assyria, *and*

27:6 [a]Hebrew *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus **27:10** [a]Hebrew *Lud* [b]Hebrew *Put*

Chilmad *were* your merchants. 24These *were* your merchants in choice items—in purple clothes, in embroidered garments, in chests of multicolored apparel, in sturdy woven cords, which were in your marketplace.

25 "The ships of Tarshish were carriers of your merchandise.
You were filled and very glorious in the midst of the seas.
26 Your oarsmen brought you into many waters,
But the east wind broke you in the midst of the seas.

27 "Your riches, wares, and merchandise,
Your mariners and pilots,
Your caulkers and merchandisers,
All your men of war who *are* in you,
And the entire company which *is* in your midst,
Will fall into the midst of the seas on the day of your ruin.
28 The common-land will shake at the sound of the cry of your pilots.

29 "All who handle the oar,
The mariners,
All the pilots of the sea
Will come down from their ships *and* stand on the shore.
30 They will make their voice heard because of you;
They will cry bitterly and cast dust on their heads;
They will roll about in ashes;
31 They will shave themselves completely bald because of you,
Gird themselves with sackcloth,
And weep for you
With bitterness of heart *and* bitter wailing.
32 In their wailing for you
They will take up a lamentation,
And lament for you:
'What *city is* like Tyre,
Destroyed in the midst of the sea?

33 'When your wares went out by sea,
You satisfied many people;
You enriched the kings of the earth
With your many luxury goods and your merchandise.
34 But you are broken by the seas in the depths of the waters;
Your merchandise and the entire company will fall in your midst.
35 All the inhabitants of the isles will be astonished at you;
Their kings will be greatly afraid,
And *their* countenance will be troubled.
36 The merchants among the peoples will hiss at you;
You will become a horror, and *be* no more forever.'" '"

Proclamation Against the King of Tyre

28 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 2"Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Because your heart *is* lifted up,
And you say, 'I *am* a god,
I sit *in* the seat of gods,
In the midst of the seas,'
Yet you *are* a man, and not a god,
Though you set your heart as the heart of a god
3 (Behold, you *are* wiser than Daniel!
There is no secret that can be hidden from you!
4 With your wisdom and your understanding
You have gained riches for yourself,
And gathered gold and silver into your treasuries;
5 By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches,
And your heart is lifted up because of your riches),"

6"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Because you have set your heart as the heart of a god,
7 Behold, therefore, I will bring strangers against you,
The most terrible of the nations;
And they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom,
And defile your splendor.
8 They shall throw you down into the Pit,
And you shall die the death of the slain
In the midst of the seas.

9 "Will you still say before him who slays you,

'I *am* a god'?
But you *shall be* a man, and not a god,
In the hand of him who slays you.
10 You shall die the death of the
uncircumcised
By the hand of aliens;
For I have spoken," says the Lord GOD.'"

Lamentation for the King of Tyre

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"You *were* the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
13 You were in Eden, the garden of God;
Every precious stone *was* your covering:
The sardius, topaz, and diamond,
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald
with gold.
The workmanship of your timbrels
and pipes
Was prepared for you on the day you
were created.

14 "You *were* the anointed cherub who
covers;
I established you;
You were on the holy mountain of God;
You walked back and forth in the
midst of fiery stones.
15 You *were* perfect in your ways from the
day you were created,
Till iniquity was found in you.

16 "By the abundance of your trading
You became filled with violence within,
And you sinned;
Therefore I cast you as a profane thing
Out of the mountain of God;
And I destroyed you, O covering
cherub,
From the midst of the fiery stones.

17 "Your heart was lifted up because of
your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom for the
sake of your splendor;
I cast you to the ground,
I laid you before kings,
That they might gaze at you.
18 "You defiled your sanctuaries
By the multitude of your iniquities,
By the iniquity of your trading;
Therefore I brought fire from your
midst;
It devoured you,
And I turned you to ashes upon
the earth
In the sight of all who saw you.
19 All who knew you among the peoples
are astonished at you;
You have become a horror,
And *shall be* no more forever." '"

Proclamation Against Sidon

20 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 21 "Son of man, set your face toward Sidon, and prophesy against her, 22 and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I *am* against you, O Sidon;
I will be glorified in your midst;
And they shall know that I *am* the LORD,
When I execute judgments in her and
am hallowed in her.
23 For I will send pestilence upon her,
And blood in her streets;
The wounded shall be judged in her
midst
By the sword against her on every side;
Then they shall know that I *am*
the LORD.

24 "And there shall no longer be a pricking brier or a painful thorn for the house of Israel from among all *who are* around them, who despise them. Then they shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD."

Israel's Future Blessing

25 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "When I have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and am hallowed in them in the sight of the Gentiles, then they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob. 26 And they will dwell safely there, build houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell securely, when I execute judgments on all those around them who despise them. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God." '"



Proclamation Against Egypt

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth *month,*
on the twelfth *day* of the month, the
word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son
of man, set your face against Pharaoh king
of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and
against all Egypt. 3Speak, and say, 'Thus
says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I *am* against you,
O Pharaoh king of Egypt,
O great monster who lies in the midst
of his rivers,
Who has said, 'My River[a] *is* my own;
I have made *it* for myself.'
4 But I will put hooks in your jaws,
And cause the fish of your rivers to
stick to your scales;
I will bring you up out of the midst of
your rivers,
And all the fish in your rivers will stick
to your scales.
5 I will leave you in the wilderness,
You and all the fish of your rivers;
You shall fall on the open field;
You shall not be picked up or
gathered.[a]
I have given you as food
To the beasts of the field
And to the birds of the heavens.

6 "Then all the inhabitants of Egypt
Shall know that I *am* the LORD,
Because they have been a staff of reed
to the house of Israel.
7 When they took hold of you with the
hand,
You broke and tore all their shoulders;[a]
When they leaned on you,
You broke and made all their backs
quiver."

8'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
"Surely I will bring a sword upon you and
cut off from you man and beast. 9And the
land of Egypt shall become desolate and
waste; then they will know that I *am* the
LORD, because he said, 'The River *is* mine,
and I have made *it*.' 10Indeed, therefore,
I *am* against you and against your rivers,
and I will make the land of Egypt utterly
waste and desolate, from Migdol[a] *to* Syene,
as far as the border of Ethiopia. 11Neither
foot of man shall pass through it nor foot
of beast pass through it, and it shall be
uninhabited forty years. 12I will make the
land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the
countries *that are* desolate; and among the
cities *that are* laid waste, her cities shall be
desolate forty years; and I will scatter the
Egyptians among the nations and disperse
them throughout the countries."

13'Yet, thus says the Lord GOD: "At
the end of forty years I will gather the
Egyptians from the peoples among whom
they were scattered. 14I will bring back
the captives of Egypt and cause them to
return to the land of Pathros, to the land
of their origin, and there they shall be a
lowly kingdom. 15It shall be the lowliest of
kingdoms; it shall never again exalt itself
above the nations, for I will diminish them
so that they will not rule over the nations
anymore. 16No longer shall it be the con-
fidence of the house of Israel, but will
remind them of *their* iniquity when they
turned to follow them. Then they shall
know that I *am* the Lord GOD." '"

Babylonia Will Plunder Egypt

17And it came to pass in the twenty-
seventh year, in the first *month,* on the
first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the
LORD came to me, saying, 18"Son of man,
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused
his army to labor strenuously against Tyre;
every head *was* made bald, and every shoul-
der rubbed raw; yet neither he nor his army
received wages from Tyre, for the labor
which they expended on it. 19Therefore
thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will give
the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king
of Babylon; he shall take away her wealth,
carry off her spoil, and remove her pillage;
and that will be the wages for his army. 20I
have given him the land of Egypt *for* his
labor, because they worked for Me,' says
the Lord GOD.

21'In that day I will cause the horn of the
house of Israel to spring forth, and I will
open your mouth to speak in their midst.
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"

29:3 [a]That is, the Nile **29:5** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Targum read *buried.* **29:7** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *hand.* **29:10** [a]Or *tower*

Egypt and Her Allies Will Fall

30 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Wail, 'Woe to the day!'
3 For the day *is* near,
Even the day of the LORD *is* near;
It will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles.
4 The sword shall come upon Egypt,
And great anguish shall be in Ethiopia,
When the slain fall in Egypt,
And they take away her wealth,
And her foundations are broken down.

5 "Ethiopia, Libya,[a] Lydia,[b] all the mingled people, Chub, and the men of the lands who are allied, shall fall with them by the sword."
6 'Thus says the LORD:

"Those who uphold Egypt shall fall,
And the pride of her power shall come down.
From Migdol *to* Syene
Those within her shall fall by the sword,"
Says the Lord GOD.

7 "They shall be desolate in the midst of the desolate countries,
And her cities shall be in the midst of the cities *that are* laid waste.
8 Then they will know that I *am* the LORD,
When I have set a fire in Egypt
And all her helpers are destroyed.
9 On that day messengers shall go forth from Me in ships
To make the careless Ethiopians afraid,
And great anguish shall come upon them,
As on the day of Egypt;
For indeed it is coming!"

10 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"I will also make a multitude of Egypt to cease
By the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
11 He and his people with him, the most terrible of the nations,
Shall be brought to destroy the land;
They shall draw their swords against Egypt,
And fill the land with the slain.
12 I will make the rivers dry,
And sell the land into the hand of the wicked;
I will make the land waste, and all that is in it,
By the hand of aliens.
I, the LORD, have spoken."

13 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"I will also destroy the idols,
And cause the images to cease from Noph;[a]
There shall no longer be princes from the land of Egypt;
I will put fear in the land of Egypt.
14 I will make Pathros desolate,
Set fire to Zoan,
And execute judgments in No.[a]
15 I will pour My fury on Sin,[a] the strength of Egypt;
I will cut off the multitude of No,
16 And set a fire in Egypt;
Sin shall have great pain,
No shall be split open,
And Noph *shall be in* distress daily.
17 The young men of Aven[a] and Pi Beseth shall fall by the sword,
And these *cities* shall go into captivity.
18 At Tehaphnehes[a] the day shall also be darkened,[b]
When I break the yokes of Egypt there.
And her arrogant strength shall cease in her;
As for her, a cloud shall cover her,
And her daughters shall go into captivity.
19 Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt,
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.' "

Proclamation Against Pharaoh

20 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first *month,* on the seventh *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 21 "Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and see, it has not been bandaged for healing, nor a splint

30:5 [a]Hebrew *Put* [b]Hebrew *Lud* **30:13** [a]That is, ancient Memphis **30:14** [a]That is, ancient Thebes **30:15** [a]That is, ancient Pelusium **30:17** [a]That is, ancient On (Heliopolis) **30:18** [a]Spelled *Tahpanhes* in Jeremiah 43:7 and elsewhere [b]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Bomberg, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *refrained.*

put on to bind it, to make it strong enough to hold a sword. 22Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I *am* against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, both the strong one and the one that was broken; and I will make the sword fall out of his hand. 23I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them throughout the countries. 24I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand; but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he will groan before him with the groanings of a mortally wounded *man*. 25Thus I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I put My sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. 26I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"

Egypt Cut Down Like a Great Tree

31 Now it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third *month*, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude:

'Whom are you like in your greatness?
3 Indeed Assyria *was* a cedar in Lebanon,
With fine branches that shaded the forest,
And of high stature;
And its top was among the thick boughs.
4 The waters made it grow;
Underground waters gave it height,
With their rivers running around the place where it was planted,
And sent out rivulets to all the trees of the field.

5 'Therefore its height was exalted above all the trees of the field;
Its boughs were multiplied,
And its branches became long because of the abundance of water,
As it sent them out.
6 All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs;
Under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young;
And in its shadow all great nations made their home.

7 'Thus it was beautiful in greatness and in the length of its branches,
Because its roots reached to abundant waters.
8 The cedars in the garden of God could not hide it;
The fir trees were not like its boughs,
And the chestnut[a] trees were not like its branches;
No tree in the garden of God was like it in beauty.
9 I made it beautiful with a multitude of branches,
So that all the trees of Eden envied it,
That *were* in the garden of God.'

10"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have increased in height, and it set its top among the thick boughs, and its heart was lifted up in its height, 11therefore I will deliver it into the hand of the mighty one of the nations, and he shall surely deal with it; I have driven it out for its wickedness. 12And aliens, the most terrible of the nations, have cut it down and left it; its branches have fallen on the mountains and in all the valleys; its boughs lie broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the peoples of the earth have gone from under its shadow and left it.

13 'On its ruin will remain all the birds of the heavens,
And all the beasts of the field will come to its branches—

14'So that no trees by the waters may ever again exalt themselves for their height, nor set their tops among the thick boughs, that no tree which drinks water may ever be high enough to reach up to them.

'For they have all been delivered to death,
To the depths of the earth,
Among the children of men who go down to the Pit.'

15"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'In the day when it went down to hell, I caused mourning. I covered the deep because of it. I

31:8 [a]Hebrew *armon*

restrained its rivers, and the great waters were held back. I caused Lebanon to mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted because of it. 16I made the nations shake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to hell together with those who descend into the Pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the depths of the earth. 17They also went down to hell with it, with those slain by the sword; and *those who were* its *strong* arm dwelt in its shadows among the nations.

18"To which of the trees in Eden will you then be likened in glory and greatness? Yet you shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the depths of the earth; you shall lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with *those* slain by the sword. This *is* Pharaoh and all his multitude,' says the Lord GOD."

Lamentation for Pharaoh and Egypt

32 And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth *month,* on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say to him:

'You are like a young lion among the nations,
And you *are* like a monster in the seas,
Bursting forth in your rivers,
Troubling the waters with your feet,
And fouling their rivers.

3"Thus says the Lord GOD:

"I will therefore spread My net over you with a company of many people,
And they will draw you up in My net.
4 Then I will leave you on the land;
I will cast you out on the open fields,
And cause to settle on you all the birds of the heavens.
And with you I will fill the beasts of the whole earth.
5 I will lay your flesh on the mountains,
And fill the valleys with your carcass.

6 "I will also water the land with the flow of your blood,
Even to the mountains;
And the riverbeds will be full of you.
7 When *I* put out your light,
I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud,
And the moon shall not give her light.
8 All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you,
And bring darkness upon your land,"
Says the Lord GOD.

9"I will also trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I bring your destruction among the nations, into the countries which you have not known. 10Yes, I will make many peoples astonished at you, and their kings shall be horribly afraid of you when I brandish My sword before them; and they shall tremble *every* moment, every man for his own life, in the day of your fall.

11"For thus says the Lord GOD: "The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. 12By the swords of the mighty warriors, all of them the most terrible of the nations, I will cause your multitude to fall.

"They shall plunder the pomp of Egypt,
And all its multitude shall be destroyed.
13 Also I will destroy all its animals
From beside its great waters;
The foot of man shall muddy them no more,
Nor shall the hooves of animals muddy them.
14 Then I will make their waters clear,
And make their rivers run like oil,"
Says the Lord GOD.

15 "When I make the land of Egypt desolate,
And the country is destitute of all that once filled it,
When I strike all who dwell in it,
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

16 "This *is* the lamentation
With which they shall lament her;
The daughters of the nations shall lament her;
They shall lament for her, for Egypt,
And for all her multitude,"
Says the Lord GOD.'"

Egypt and Others Consigned to the Pit

17 It came to pass also in the twelfth year,
on the fifteenth *day* of the month, *that* the
word of the LORD came to me, saying:

18 "Son of man, wail over the multitude
of Egypt,
And cast them down to the depths of
the earth,
Her and the daughters of the famous
nations,
With those who go down to the Pit:
19 'Whom do you surpass in beauty?
Go down, be placed with the
uncircumcised.'

20 "They shall fall in the midst of *those*
slain by the sword;
She is delivered to the sword,
Drawing her and all her multitudes.
21 The strong among the mighty
Shall speak to him out of the midst
of hell
With those who help him:
'They have gone down,
They lie with the uncircumcised, slain
by the sword.'

22 "Assyria *is* there, and all her company,
With their graves all around her,
All of them slain, fallen by the sword.
23 Her graves are set in the recesses of
the Pit,
And her company is all around her grave,
All of them slain, fallen by the sword,
Who caused terror in the land of the
living.

24 "There *is* Elam and all her multitude,
All around her grave,
All of them slain, fallen by the sword,
Who have gone down uncircumcised
to the lower parts of the earth,
Who caused their terror in the land of
the living;
Now they bear their shame with those
who go down to the Pit.
25 They have set her bed in the midst of
the slain,
With all her multitude,
With her graves all around it,
All of them uncircumcised, slain by
the sword;
Though their terror was caused
In the land of the living,
Yet they bear their shame
With those who go down to the Pit;
It was put in the midst of the slain.

26 "There *are* Meshech and Tubal and all
their multitudes,
With all their graves around it,
All of them uncircumcised, slain by
the sword,
Though they caused their terror in the
land of the living.
27 They do not lie with the mighty
Who are fallen of the uncircumcised,
Who have gone down to hell with their
weapons of war;
They have laid their swords under
their heads,
But their iniquities will be on their
bones,
Because of the terror of the mighty in
the land of the living.
28 Yes, you shall be broken in the midst of
the uncircumcised,
And lie with *those* slain by the sword.

29 "There *is* Edom,
Her kings and all her princes,
Who despite their might
Are laid beside *those* slain by the sword;
They shall lie with the uncircumcised,
And with those who go down to the Pit.
30 There *are* the princes of the north,
All of them, and all the Sidonians,
Who have gone down with the slain
In shame at the terror which they
caused by their might;
They lie uncircumcised with *those* slain
by the sword,
And bear their shame with those who
go down to the Pit.

31 "Pharaoh will see them
And be comforted over all his multitude,
Pharaoh and all his army,
Slain by the sword,"
Says the Lord GOD.

32 "For I have caused My terror in the land
of the living;
And he shall be placed in the midst of
the uncircumcised

Apocalypse in Hindsight

GLORIA GAITHER

It began with no ado—
The fig tree always blossoms,
So that was nothing new.
The sky was filled with wonders,
But wonders are the norm
To those who've learned to see.
There was a holy hush,
Now that you mention it,
A stillness like the sound
Of marrow in the bone,
Regenerating life and sending out
Red cells to slither down
The cylinders so small.
I guess we should have known—
The moon that funny color
Like sun at six o'clock—
But we'd grown accustomed to
The tricks the atmosphere can play,
Polluted by the progress man has made.
Yes, now I do recall
A far-off sound
Like some musician tuning
In the practice room backstage.
But I see this all
In hindsight; I really
Didn't notice what was happening
Until the trumpet blew.

With *those* slain by the sword,
Pharaoh and all his multitude,"
Says the Lord GOD.

The Watchman and His Message

33 Again the word of the LORD came
to me, saying, 2"Son of man, speak
to the children of your people, and say to
them: 'When I bring the sword upon a land,
and the people of the land take a man from
their territory and make him their watch-
man, 3when he sees the sword coming upon
the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns
the people, 4then whoever hears the sound
of the trumpet and does not take warning,
if the sword comes and takes him away, his
blood shall be on his *own* head. 5He heard
the sound of the trumpet, but did not take
warning; his blood shall be upon himself.
But he who takes warning will save his life.
6But if the watchman sees the sword com-
ing and does not blow the trumpet, and the
people are not warned, and the sword comes
and takes *any* person from among them, he
is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I
will require at the watchman's hand.'

7"So you, son of man: I have made you
a watchman for the house of Israel; there-
fore you shall hear a word from My mouth
and warn them for Me. 8When I say to the
wicked, 'O wicked *man,* you shall surely die!'
and you do not speak to warn the wicked
from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in
his iniquity; but his blood I will require at
your hand. 9Nevertheless if you warn the
wicked to turn from his way, and he does
not turn from his way, he shall die in his
iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

10"Therefore you, O son of man, say to
the house of Israel: 'Thus you say, "If our
transgressions and our sins *lie* upon us,
and we pine away in them, how can we then
live?" ' 11Say to them: '*As* I live,' says the Lord
GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the
wicked, but that the wicked turn from his
way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways!
For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

The Fairness of God's Judgment

12"Therefore you, O son of man, say to
the children of your people: 'The right-
teousness of the righteous man shall not
deliver him in the day of his transgression;

We believe that God is present everywhere, and the eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the good and the bad . . . We must therefore consider how we should behave in this sight of Divine Majesty, and as we sing our psalms and let us see to it that our mind is in harmony with our voice.

BENEDICT OF NURSIA

as for the wickedness of the wicked, he
shall not fall because of it in the day that
he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the
righteous be able to live because of *his right-
teousness* in the day that he sins.' 13When I
say to the righteous *that* he shall surely live,
but he trusts in his own righteousness and
commits iniquity, none of his righteous
works shall be remembered; but because
of the iniquity that he has committed, he
shall die. 14Again, when I say to the wicked,
'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his
sin and does what is lawful and right, 15*if*
the wicked restores the pledge, gives back
what he has stolen, and walks in the stat-
utes of life without committing iniquity, he
shall surely live; he shall not die. 16None
of his sins which he has committed shall
be remembered against him; he has done
what is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

17"Yet the children of your people say,
'The way of the Lord is not fair.' But it is
their way which is not fair! 18When the
righteous turns from his righteousness
and commits iniquity, he shall die because
of it. 19But when the wicked turns from
his wickedness and does what is lawful
and right, he shall live because of it. 20Yet
you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O
house of Israel, I will judge every one of
you according to his own ways."

The Fall of Jerusalem

21And it came to pass in the twelfth year
of our captivity, in the tenth *month,* on the
fifth *day* of the month, *that* one who had
escaped from Jerusalem came to me and
said, "The city has been captured!"

22Now the hand of the LORD had been
upon me the evening before the man came
who had escaped. And He had opened
my mouth; so when he came to me in the
morning, my mouth was opened, and I was
no longer mute.

The Cause of Judah's Ruin

23Then the word of the LORD came to
me, saying: 24"Son of man, they who inhabit
those ruins in the land of Israel are saying,
'Abraham was only one, and he inherited
the land. But we *are* many; the land has
been given to us as a possession.'

25"Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the
Lord GOD: "You eat *meat* with blood, you
lift up your eyes toward your idols, and
shed blood. Should you then possess the
land? 26You rely on your sword, you commit
abominations, and you defile one another's
wives. Should you then possess the land?" '

27"Say thus to them, 'Thus says the Lord
GOD: "*As* I live, surely those who *are* in the
ruins shall fall by the sword, and the one
who *is* in the open field I will give to the
beasts to be devoured, and those who *are*
in the strongholds and caves shall die of
the pestilence. 28For I will make the land
most desolate, her arrogant strength shall
cease, and the mountains of Israel shall be
so desolate that no one will pass through.
29Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD,
when I have made the land most desolate
because of all their abominations which
they have committed." '

Hearing and Not Doing

30"As for you, son of man, the children of
your people are talking about you beside
the walls and in the doors of the houses;
and they speak to one another, everyone
saying to his brother, 'Please come and
hear what the word is that comes from the
LORD.' 31So they come to you as people do,
they sit before you *as* My people, and they
hear your words, but they do not do them;
for with their mouth they show much love,
but their hearts pursue their *own* gain.
32Indeed you *are* to them as a very lovely
song of one who has a pleasant voice and
can play well on an instrument; for they
hear your words, but they do not do them.
33And when this comes to pass—surely
it will come—then they will know that a
prophet has been among them."

Irresponsible Shepherds

34 And the word of the LORD came to
me, saying, 2"Son of man, prophesy
against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy
and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD
to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of
Israel who feed themselves! Should not the
shepherds feed the flocks? 3You eat the fat
and clothe yourselves with the wool; you
slaughter the fatlings, *but* you do not feed
the flock. 4The weak you have not strength-
ened, nor have you healed those who were
sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought
back what was driven away, nor sought
what was lost; but with force and cruelty
you have ruled them. 5So they were scat-
tered because *there was* no shepherd; and
they became food for all the beasts of the
field when they were scattered. 6My sheep
wandered through all the mountains, and
on every high hill; yes, My flock was scat-
tered over the whole face of the earth, and
no one was seeking or searching *for them*."

7'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the
word of the LORD: 8"*As* I live," says the Lord
GOD, "surely because My flock became a
prey, and My flock became food for every
beast of the field, because *there was* no
shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for
My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves
and did not feed My flock"— 9therefore,
O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD!
10Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am*
against the shepherds, and I will require
My flock at their hand; I will cause them
to cease feeding the sheep, and the shep-
herds shall feed themselves no more; for
I will deliver My flock from their mouths,
that they may no longer be food for them."

God, the True Shepherd

11'For thus says the Lord GOD: "Indeed
I Myself will search for My sheep and seek
them out. 12As a shepherd seeks out his
flock on the day he is among his scattered
sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and
deliver them from all the places where they
were scattered on a cloudy and dark day.
13And I will bring them out from the peo-
ples and gather them from the countries,

"I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD. "I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."

EZEKIEL 34:15, 16

Then the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; and His own righteousness, it sustained Him.

ISAIAH 59:15, 16

Where did we even get the idea that the rich and powerful have more favor with God? God always identifies with the poor and powerless, and when there is no advocate He promises to become their advocate Himself. This, however, does not just refer to earthly power and possessions. Those who are spiritually impoverished, those who are so weak and malnourished that they cannot lift up their heads will be shepherded and ministered to by God Himself. But those who failed these poor, those who squandered the food of the Spirit and failed to feed the hungry with it, shall be harshly judged and made to move to the back of the line. God's ears are closed to the praise sacrifices of those who hoard the bounties of the Spirit, the introspected navel-gazers who do not passionately redistribute the riches they've been given. For being so loved should make us lovers. Being in vertical relationships (with God) should precipitate horizontal compassion.

and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD. 16"I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."

17'And *as for* you, O My flock, thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats. 18*Is it* too little for you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture—and to have drunk of the clear waters, that you must foul the residue with your feet? 19And *as for* My flock, they eat what you have trampled with your feet, and they drink what you have fouled with your feet."

20'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD to them: "Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep. 21Because you have pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad, 22therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

25"I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. 26I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing. 27Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them.

28 And they shall no longer be a prey for
the nations, nor shall beasts of the land
devour them; but they shall dwell safely,
and no one shall make *them* afraid. 29 I will
raise up for them a garden of renown, and
they shall no longer be consumed with
hunger in the land, nor bear the shame
of the Gentiles anymore. 30 Thus they shall
know that I, the LORD their God, *am* with
them, and they, the house of Israel, *are* My
people," says the Lord GOD.'

31 "You are My flock, the flock of My pas-
ture; you *are* men, *and* I *am* your God," says
the Lord GOD.

Judgment on Mount Seir

35 Moreover the word of the LORD
came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man,
set your face against Mount Seir and
prophesy against it, 3 and say to it, 'Thus
says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, O Mount Seir, I *am* against you;
I will stretch out My hand against you,
And make you most desolate;
4 I shall lay your cities waste,
And you shall be desolate.
Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

5 "Because you have had an ancient
hatred, and have shed *the blood of* the chil-
dren of Israel by the power of the sword at
the time of their calamity, when their iniq-
uity *came to an* end, 6 therefore, *as* I live,"
says the Lord GOD, "I will prepare you for
blood, and blood shall pursue you; since
you have not hated blood, therefore blood
shall pursue you. 7 Thus I will make Mount
Seir most desolate, and cut off from it the
one who leaves and the one who returns.
8 And I will fill its mountains with the slain;
on your hills and in your valleys and in all
your ravines those who are slain by the
sword shall fall. 9 I will make you perpetually
desolate, and your cities shall be uninhab-
ited; then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

10 "Because you have said, 'These two
nations and these two countries shall be
mine, and we will possess them,' although
the LORD was there, 11 therefore, *as* I live,"
says the Lord GOD, "I will do according
to your anger and according to the envy
which you showed in your hatred against
them; and I will make Myself known among
them when I judge you. 12 Then you shall
know that I *am* the LORD. I have heard all
your blasphemies which you have spoken
against the mountains of Israel, saying,
'They are desolate; they are given to us
to consume.' 13 Thus with your mouth you
have boasted against Me and multiplied
your words against Me; I have heard *them*."

14 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "The whole
earth will rejoice when I make you desolate.
15 As you rejoiced because the inheritance
of the house of Israel was desolate, so I will
do to you; you shall be desolate, O Mount
Seir, as well as all of Edom—all of it! Then
they shall know that I *am* the LORD." '

Blessing on Israel

36 "And you, son of man, prophesy to
the mountains of Israel, and say, 'O
mountains of Israel, hear the word of the
LORD! 2 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because
the enemy has said of you, 'Aha! The ancient
heights have become our possession,'" '
3 therefore prophesy, and say, 'Thus says the
Lord GOD: "Because they made *you* desolate
and swallowed you up on every side, so that
you became the possession of the rest of the
nations, and you are taken up by the lips
of talkers and slandered by the people"—
4 therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the
word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord
GOD to the mountains, the hills, the riv-
ers, the valleys, the desolate wastes, and
the cities that have been forsaken, which
became plunder and mockery to the rest
of the nations all around— 5 therefore thus
says the Lord GOD: "Surely I have spoken
in My burning jealousy against the rest of
the nations and against all Edom, who gave
My land to themselves as a possession, with
wholehearted joy *and* spiteful minds, in
order to plunder its open country." '

6 "Therefore prophesy concerning the
land of Israel, and say to the mountains,
the hills, the rivers, and the valleys, 'Thus
says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I have spo-
ken in My jealousy and My fury, because
you have borne the shame of the nations."
7 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I have
raised My hand in an oath that surely the
nations that *are* around you shall bear their
own shame. 8 But you, O mountains of Israel,

you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. 9For indeed I *am* for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. 10I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better *for you* than at your beginnings. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD. 12Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance; no more shall you bereave them *of children*."

13'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because they say to you, 'You devour men and bereave your nation *of children*,' 14therefore you shall devour men no more, nor bereave your nation anymore," says the Lord GOD. 15"Nor will I let you hear the taunts of the nations anymore, nor bear the reproach of the peoples anymore, nor shall you cause your nation to stumble anymore," says the Lord GOD.'"

The Renewal of Israel

16Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 17"Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. 18Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols *with which* they had defiled it. 19So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. 20When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, 'These *are* the people of the LORD, *and* yet they have gone out of His land.' 21But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went.

22"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do *this* for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. 24For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*. 28Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. 30And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 31Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that *were* not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. 32Not for your sake do I do *this*," says the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!"

33'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable *you* to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. 34The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. 35So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities *are now* fortified *and* inhabited.' 36Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places *and* planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken *it*, and I will do *it*."

37'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. 38Like a flock *offered as* holy *sacrifices*, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with

flocks of men. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.' "

The Dry Bones Live

37 The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it *was* full of bones. 2Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and indeed *they were* very dry. 3And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know."

4Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD." ' "

7So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but *there was* no breath in them.

9Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' " 10So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' 12Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. 14I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* and performed *it*," says the LORD.' "

One Kingdom, One King

15Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 16"As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel, his companions.' 17Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.

18"And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, 'Will you not show us what you *mean* by these?'— 19say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand." ' 20And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.

21"Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

24"David My servant *shall be* king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever. 26Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an

everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 28The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore." '"

Gog and Allies Attack Israel

38 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh,[a] Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, 3and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. 4I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. 5Persia, Ethiopia,[a] and Libya[b] are with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet; 6Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah *from* the far north and all its troops—many people *are* with you.

7"Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. 8After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword *and* gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. 9You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you."

10'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day it shall come to pass *that* thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: 11You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'— 12to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places *that are again* inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. 13Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?'" '

14"Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know *it?* 15Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. 16You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes." 17Thus says the Lord GOD: "Are *you* he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?

Judgment on Gog

18"And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "*that* My fury will show in My face. 19For in My jealousy *and* in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, 20so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who *are* on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.' 21I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. 22And I will bring him to judgment with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who *are* with him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. 23Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD." '

38:2 [a]Targum, Vulgate, and Aquila read *chief prince of* (also verse 3).
38:5 [a]Hebrew *Cush* [b]Hebrew *Put*

Gog's Armies Destroyed

39 "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh,[a] Meshech, and Tubal; [2]and I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel. [3]Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. [4]You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who *are* with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and *to* the beasts of the field to be devoured. [5]You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken," says the Lord GOD. [6]"And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD. [7]So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not *let them* profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that *I am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. [8]Surely it is coming, and it shall be done," says the Lord GOD. "This *is* the day of which I have spoken.

[9]"Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for seven years. [10]They will not take wood from the field nor cut down *any* from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons; and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them," says the Lord GOD.

The Burial of Gog

[11]"It will come to pass in that day *that* I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call *it* the Valley of Hamon Gog.[a] [12]For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. [13]Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified," says the Lord GOD. [14]"They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party,[a] to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. [15]The search party will pass through the land; and *when anyone* sees a man's bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. [16]*The* name of *the* city *will* also *be* Hamonah. Thus they shall cleanse the land." '

A Triumphant Festival

[17]"And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field:

"Assemble yourselves and come;
Gather together from all sides to
My sacrificial meal
Which I am sacrificing for you,
A great sacrificial meal on the
mountains of Israel,
That you may eat flesh and drink blood.
[18] You shall eat the flesh of the mighty,
Drink the blood of the princes of
the earth,
Of rams and lambs,
Of goats and bulls,
All of them fatlings of Bashan.
[19] You shall eat fat till you are full,
And drink blood till you are drunk,
At My sacrificial meal
Which I am sacrificing for you.
[20] You shall be filled at My table
With horses and riders,
With mighty men
And with all the men of war," says
the Lord GOD.

Israel Restored to the Land

[21]"I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them. [22]So the house of Israel shall know that I *am* the LORD their God from that day forward. [23]The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies,

39:1 [a]Targum, Vulgate and Aquila read *chief prince of*. **39:11** [a]Literally *The Multitude of Gog* **39:14** [a]Literally *those who pass through*

and they all fell by the sword. [24]According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them." '

[25]"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name— [26]after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their *own* land and no one made *them* afraid. [27]When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, [28]then they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer. [29]And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,' says the Lord GOD."

A New City, a New Temple

40 In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth *day* of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was captured, on the very same day the hand of the LORD was upon me; and He took me there. [2]In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south *was* something like the structure of a city. [3]He took me there, and behold, *there was* a man whose appearance *was* like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood in the gateway.

[4]And the man said to me, "Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears, and fix your mind on everything I show you; for you *were* brought here so that I might show *them* to you. Declare to the house of Israel everything you see." [5]Now there was a wall all around the outside of the temple.[a] In the man's hand was a measuring rod six cubits *long, each being a* cubit and a handbreadth; and he measured the width of the wall structure, one rod; and the height, one rod.

The Eastern Gateway of the Temple

[6]Then he went to the gateway which faced east; and he went up its stairs and measured the threshold of the gateway, *which was* one rod wide, and the other threshold *was* one rod wide. [7]Each gate chamber *was* one rod long and one rod wide; between the gate chambers *was a space of* five cubits; and the threshold of the gateway by the vestibule of the inside gate *was* one rod. [8]He also measured the vestibule of the inside gate, one rod. [9]Then he measured the vestibule of the gateway, eight cubits; and the gateposts, two cubits. The vestibule of the gate *was* on the inside. [10]In the eastern gateway *were* three gate chambers on one side and three on the other; the three *were* all the same size; also the gateposts were of the same size on this side and that side.

[11]He measured the width of the entrance to the gateway, ten cubits; *and* the length of the gate, thirteen cubits. [12]*There was* a space in front of the gate chambers, one cubit *on this side* and one cubit on that side; the gate chambers *were* six cubits on this side and six cubits on that side. [13]Then he measured the gateway from the roof of *one* gate chamber to the roof of the other; the width *was* twenty-five cubits, as door faces door. [14]He measured the gateposts, sixty cubits high, and the court all around the gateway *extended* to the gatepost. [15]*From* the front of the entrance gate to the front of the vestibule of the inner gate *was* fifty cubits. [16]*There were* beveled window *frames* in the gate chambers and in their intervening archways on the inside of the gateway all around, and likewise in the vestibules. *There were* windows all around on the inside. And on each gatepost *were* palm trees.

The Outer Court

[17]Then he brought me into the outer court; and *there were* chambers and a pavement made all around the court; thirty chambers faced the pavement. [18]The pavement was by the side of the gateways, corresponding to the length of the gateways; *this was* the lower pavement. [19]Then he measured the width from the front of

40:5 [a]Literally *house,* and so elsewhere in this book

the lower gateway to the front of the inner court exterior, one hundred cubits toward the east and the north.

The Northern Gateway

[20]On the outer court was also a gateway facing north, and he measured its length and its width. [21]Its gate chambers, three on this side and three on that side, its gateposts and its archways, had the same measurements as the first gate; its length *was* fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. [22]Its windows and those of its archways, and also its palm trees, *had* the same measurements as the gateway facing east; it was ascended by seven steps, and its archway *was* in front of it. [23]A gate of the inner court was opposite the northern gateway, just as the eastern *gateway;* and he measured from gateway to gateway, one hundred cubits.

The Southern Gateway

[24]After that he brought me toward the south, and there a gateway was facing south; and he measured its gateposts and archways according to these same measurements. [25]*There were* windows in it and in its archways all around like those windows; its length *was* fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. [26]Seven steps led up to it, and its archway *was* in front of them; and it had palm trees on its gateposts, one on this side and one on that side. [27]*There was* also a gateway on the inner court, facing south; and he measured from gateway to gateway toward the south, one hundred cubits.

Gateways of the Inner Court

[28]Then he brought me to the inner court through the southern gateway; he measured the southern gateway according to these same measurements. [29]Also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways *were* according to these same measurements; *there were* windows in it and in its archways all around; *it was* fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. [30]*There were* archways all around, twenty-five cubits long and five cubits wide. [31]Its archways faced the outer court, palm trees *were* on its gateposts, and going up to it *were* eight steps.

[32]And he brought me into the inner court facing east; he measured the gateway according to these same measurements. [33]Also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways *were* according to these same measurements; and *there were* windows in it and in its archways all around; *it was* fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. [34]Its archways faced the outer court, and palm trees *were* on its gateposts on this side and on that side; and going up to it *were* eight steps.

[35]Then he brought me to the north gateway and measured *it* according to these same measurements— [36]also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways. It had windows all around; its length *was* fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. [37]Its gateposts faced the outer court, palm trees *were* on its gateposts on this side and on that side, and going up to it *were* eight steps.

Where Sacrifices Were Prepared

[38]*There was* a chamber and its entrance by the gateposts of the gateway, where they washed the burnt offering. [39]In the vestibule of the gateway *were* two tables on this side and two tables on that side, on which to slay the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. [40]At the outer side of the *vestibule,* as one goes up to the entrance of the northern gateway, *were* two tables; and on the other side of the vestibule of the gateway *were* two tables. [41]Four tables *were* on

this side and four tables on that side, by the side of the gateway, eight tables on which they slaughtered *the sacrifices.* 42*There were* also four tables of hewn stone for the burnt offering, one cubit and a half long, one cubit and a half wide, and one cubit high; on these they laid the instruments with which they slaughtered the burnt offering and the sacrifice. 43Inside *were* hooks, a handbreadth wide, fastened all around; and the flesh of the sacrifices *was* on the tables.

Chambers for Singers and Priests

44Outside the inner gate *were* the chambers for the singers in the inner court, one facing south at the side of the northern gateway, and the other facing north at the side of the southern[a] gateway. 45Then he said to me, "This chamber which faces south *is* for the priests who have charge of the temple. 46The chamber which faces north *is* for the priests who have charge of the altar; these *are* the sons of Zadok, from the sons of Levi, who come near the LORD to minister to Him."

Dimensions of the Inner Court and Vestibule

47And he measured the court, one hundred cubits long and one hundred cubits wide, foursquare. The altar *was* in front of the temple. 48Then he brought me to the vestibule of the temple and measured the doorposts of the vestibule, five cubits on this side and five cubits on that side; and the width of the gateway was three cubits on this side and three cubits on that side. 49The length of the vestibule *was* twenty cubits, and the width eleven cubits; and by the steps which led up to it *there were* pillars by the doorposts, one on this side and another on that side.

Dimensions of the Sanctuary

41 Then he brought me into the sanctuary[a] and measured the doorposts, six cubits wide on one side and six cubits wide on the other side—the width of the tabernacle. 2The width of the entryway *was* ten cubits, and the side walls of the entrance *were* five cubits on this side and five cubits on the other side; and he measured its length, forty cubits, and its width, twenty cubits.

3Also he went inside and measured the doorposts, two cubits; and the entrance, six cubits *high;* and the width of the entrance, seven cubits. 4He measured the length, twenty cubits; and the width, twenty cubits, beyond the sanctuary; and he said to me, "This *is* the Most Holy *Place.*"

The Side Chambers on the Wall

5Next, he measured the wall of the temple, six cubits. The width of each side chamber all around the temple *was* four cubits on every side. 6The side chambers *were* in three stories, one above the other, thirty chambers in each story; they rested on ledges which *were* for the side chambers all around, that they might be supported, but not fastened to the wall of the temple. 7As one went up from story to story, the side chambers became wider all around, because their supporting ledges in the wall of the temple ascended like steps; therefore the width of the structure increased as one went up *from* the lowest *story* to the highest by way of the middle one. 8I also saw an elevation all around the temple; it was the foundation of the side chambers, a full rod, *that is,* six cubits *high.* 9The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers *was* five cubits, and so also the remaining terrace by the place of the side chambers of the temple. 10And between *it and* the *wall* chambers was a width of twenty cubits all around the temple on every side. 11The doors of the side chambers opened on the terrace, one door toward the north and another toward the south; and the width of the terrace *was* five cubits all around.

The Building at the Western End

12The building that faced the separating courtyard at its western end *was* seventy cubits wide; the wall of the building *was* five cubits thick all around, and its length ninety cubits.

Dimensions and Design of the Temple Area

13So he measured the temple, one hundred cubits long; and the separating courtyard with the building and its walls *was* one hundred cubits long; 14also the

40:44 [a]Following Septuagint; Masoretic Text and Vulgate read *eastern.*
41:1 [a]Hebrew *heykal,* here the main room of the temple, sometimes called the *holy place* (compare Exodus 26:33)

width of the eastern face of the temple, including the separating courtyard, *was* one hundred cubits. 15He measured the length of the building behind it, facing the separating courtyard, with its galleries on the one side and on the other side, one hundred cubits, as well as the inner temple and the porches of the court, 16their doorposts and the beveled window frames. And the galleries all around their three stories opposite the threshold were paneled with wood from the ground to the windows—the windows were covered— 17from the space above the door, even to the inner room,[a] as well as outside, and on every wall all around, inside and outside, by measure.

18And *it was* made with cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. *Each* cherub had two faces, 19so that the face of a man *was* toward a palm tree on one side, and the face of a young lion toward a palm tree on the other side; thus *it was* made throughout the temple all around. 20From the floor to the space above the door, and on the wall of the sanctuary, cherubim and palm trees *were* carved.

21The doorposts of the temple *were* square, *as was* the front of the sanctuary; their appearance was similar. 22The altar *was* of wood, three cubits high, and its length two cubits. Its corners, its length, and its sides *were* of wood; and he said to me, "This *is* the table that *is* before the LORD."

23The temple and the sanctuary had two doors. 24The doors had two panels *apiece,* two folding panels: two *panels* for one door and two panels for the other *door.* 25Cherubim and palm trees *were* carved on the doors of the temple just as they *were* carved on the walls. A wooden canopy *was* on the front of the vestibule outside. 26*There were* beveled window *frames* and palm trees on one side and on the other, on the sides of the vestibule—also on the side chambers of the temple and on the canopies.

The Chambers for the Priests

42 Then he brought me out into the outer court, by the way toward the north; and he brought me into the chamber which *was* opposite the separating courtyard, and which *was* opposite the building toward the north. 2Facing the length, *which was* one hundred cubits (the width was fifty cubits), was the north door. 3Opposite the inner court of twenty *cubits,* and opposite the pavement of the outer court, *was* gallery against gallery in three *stories.* 4In front of the chambers, toward the inside, *was* a walk ten cubits wide, at a distance of one cubit; and their doors faced north. 5Now the upper chambers *were* shorter, because the galleries took away *space* from them more than from the lower and middle stories of the building. 6For they *were* in three *stories* and did not have pillars like the pillars of the courts; therefore *the upper level* was shortened more than the lower and middle levels from the ground up. 7And a wall which *was* outside ran parallel to the chambers, at the front of the chambers, toward the outer court; its length *was* fifty cubits. 8The length of the chambers toward the outer court *was* fifty cubits, whereas that facing the temple *was* one hundred cubits. 9At the lower chambers *was* the entrance on the east side, as one goes into them from the outer court.

10Also *there were* chambers in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, opposite the separating courtyard and opposite the building. 11*There was* a walk in front of them also, and their appearance *was* like the chambers which *were* toward the north; they *were* as long and as wide as the others, and all their exits and entrances *were* according to plan. 12And corresponding to the doors of the chambers that *were* facing south, as one enters them, *there was* a door in front of the walk, the way directly in front of the wall toward the east.

13Then he said to me, "The north chambers *and* the south chambers, which *are* opposite the separating courtyard, *are* the holy chambers where the priests who approach the LORD shall eat the most holy offerings. There they shall lay the most holy offerings—the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering—for the place *is* holy. 14When the priests enter them, they shall not go out of the holy *chamber* into the outer court; but there they shall leave their garments in which they minister, for they *are* holy. They shall put on other garments; then they may approach *that* which *is* for the people."

41:17 [a]Literally *house,* here *the Most Holy Place*

Outer Dimensions of the Temple

15Now when he had finished measuring
the inner temple, he brought me out through
the gateway that faces toward the east, and
measured it all around. 16He measured the
east side with the measuring rod,[a] five hun-
dred rods by the measuring rod all around.
17He measured the north side, five hundred
rods by the measuring rod all around. 18He
measured the south side, five hundred rods
by the measuring rod. 19He came around to
the west side *and* measured five hundred
rods by the measuring rod. 20He measured it
on the four sides; it had a wall all around, five
hundred *cubits* long and five hundred wide,
to separate the holy areas from the common.

The Temple, the Lord's Dwelling Place

43 Afterward he brought me to the
gate, the gate that faces toward the
east. 2And behold, the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the east. His
voice *was* like the sound of many waters;
and the earth shone with His glory. 3*It was*
like the appearance of the vision which I
saw—like the vision which I saw when I[a]
came to destroy the city. The visions *were*
like the vision which I saw by the River
Chebar; and I fell on my face. 4And the
glory of the Lord came into the temple
by way of the gate which faces toward the
east. 5The Spirit lifted me up and brought
me into the inner court; and behold, the
glory of the Lord filled the temple.

6Then I heard *Him* speaking to me from
the temple, while a man stood beside me.
7And He said to me, "Son of man, *this is* the
place of My throne and the place of the
soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the
midst of the children of Israel forever. No
more shall the house of Israel defile My holy
name, they nor their kings, by their harlotry
or with the carcasses of their kings on their
high places. 8When they set their threshold
by My threshold, and their doorpost by My
doorpost, with a wall between them and Me,
they defiled My holy name by the abomi-
nations which they committed; therefore I
have consumed them in My anger. 9Now let
them put their harlotry and the carcasses
of their kings far away from Me, and I will
dwell in their midst forever.

10"Son of man, describe the temple to the
house of Israel, that they may be ashamed
of their iniquities; and let them measure
the pattern. 11And if they are ashamed of all
that they have done, make known to them
the design of the temple and its arrange-
ment, its exits and its entrances, its entire
design and all its ordinances, all its forms
and all its laws. Write *it* down in their sight,
so that they may keep its whole design and
all its ordinances, and perform them. 12This
is the law of the temple: The whole area
surrounding the mountaintop *is* most holy.
Behold, this *is* the law of the temple.

Dimensions of the Altar

13"These are the measurements of the
altar in cubits (the cubit *is* one cubit and a
handbreadth): the base one cubit high and
one cubit wide, with a rim all around its
edge of one span. This *is* the height of the
altar: 14from the base on the ground to the
lower ledge, two cubits; the width of the
ledge, one cubit; from the smaller ledge to
the larger ledge, four cubits; and the width
of the ledge, *one* cubit. 15The altar hearth *is*
four cubits high, with four horns extending
upward from the hearth. 16The altar hearth
is twelve *cubits* long, twelve wide, square
at its four corners; 17the ledge, fourteen
cubits long and fourteen wide on its four
sides, with a rim of half a cubit around it;
its base, one cubit all around; and its steps
face toward the east."

Consecrating the Altar

18And He said to me, "Son of man, thus
says the Lord God: 'These *are* the ordi-
nances for the altar on the day when it is
made, for sacrificing burnt offerings on it,
and for sprinkling blood on it. 19You shall
give a young bull for a sin offering to the
priests, the Levites, who are of the seed of
Zadok, who approach Me to minister to Me,'
says the Lord God. 20'You shall take some of
its blood and put *it* on the four horns of the
altar, on the four corners of the ledge, and
on the rim around it; thus you shall cleanse
it and make atonement for it. 21Then you
shall also take the bull of the sin offering,
and burn it in the appointed place of the

42:16 [a]Compare 40:5 **43:3** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate read *He*.

temple, outside the sanctuary. 22On the second day you shall offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they cleansed *it* with the bull. 23When you have finished cleansing *it,* you shall offer a young bull without blemish, and a ram from the flock without blemish. 24When you offer them before the LORD, the priests shall throw salt on them, and they will offer them up *as* a burnt offering to the LORD. 25Every day for seven days you shall prepare a goat *for* a sin offering; they shall also prepare a young bull and a ram from the flock, both without blemish. 26Seven days they shall make atonement for the altar and purify it, and so consecrate *it*. 27When these days are over it shall be, on the eighth day and thereafter, that the priests shall offer your burnt offerings and your peace offerings on the altar; and I will accept you,' says the Lord GOD."

The East Gate and the Prince

44 Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it *was* shut. 2And the LORD said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. 3*As for* the prince, *because* he *is* the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way."

Those Admitted to the Temple

4Also He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; so I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD; and I fell on my face. 5And the LORD said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears, all that I say to you concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD and all its laws. Mark well who may enter the house and all who go out from the sanctuary.

6"Now say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "O house of Israel, let Us have no more of all your abominations. 7When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it—My house—and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations. 8And you have not kept charge of My holy things, but you have set *others* to keep charge of My sanctuary for you." 9Thus says the Lord GOD: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who *is* among the children of Israel.

Laws Governing Priests

10"And the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. 11Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, *as* gatekeepers of the house and ministers of the house; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. 12Because they ministered to them before their idols and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity, therefore I have raised My hand in an oath against them," says the Lord GOD, "that they shall bear their iniquity. 13And they shall not come near Me to minister to Me as priest, nor come near any of My holy things, nor into the Most Holy *Place;* but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. 14Nevertheless I will make them keep charge of the temple, for all its work, and for all that has to be done in it.

15"But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood," says the Lord GOD. 16"They shall enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge. 17And it shall be, whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, that they shall put on linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister within the gates of the inner court or within the house. 18They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with *anything that causes* sweat. 19When they go out to the outer court, to the outer court to the people, they shall take off their garments in which they have ministered, leave them

in the holy chambers, and put on other garments; and in their holy garments they shall not sanctify the people.

20"They shall neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow long, but they shall keep their hair well trimmed. 21No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court. 22They shall not take as wife a widow or a divorced woman, but take virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests.

23"And they shall teach My people *the difference* between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. 24In controversy they shall stand as judges, *and* judge it according to My judgments. They shall keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed meetings, and they shall hallow My Sabbaths.

25"They shall not defile *themselves* by coming near a dead person. Only for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister may they defile themselves. 26After he is cleansed, they shall count seven days for him. 27And on the day that he goes to the sanctuary to minister in the sanctuary, he must offer his sin offering in the inner court," says the Lord GOD.

28"It shall be, in regard to their inheritance, *that* I *am* their inheritance. You shall give them no possession in Israel, for I *am* their possession. 29They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering; every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs. 30The best of all firstfruits of any kind, and every sacrifice of any kind from all your sacrifices, shall be the priest's; also you shall give to the priest the first of your ground meal, to cause a blessing to rest on your house. 31The priests shall not eat anything, bird or beast, that died naturally or was torn *by wild beasts*.

The Holy District

45 "Moreover, when you divide the land by lot into inheritance, you shall set apart a district for the LORD, a holy section of the land; its length *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits,* and the width ten thousand. It *shall be* holy throughout its territory all around. 2Of this there shall be a square plot for the sanctuary, five hundred by five hundred *rods,* with fifty cubits around it for an open space. 3So this is the district you shall measure: twenty-five thousand *cubits* long and ten thousand wide; in it shall be the sanctuary, the Most Holy *Place.* 4It shall be a holy *section* of the land, belonging to the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, who come near to minister to the LORD; it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. 5*An area* twenty-five thousand *cubits* long and ten thousand wide shall belong to the Levites, the ministers of the temple; they shall have twenty chambers as a possession.[a]

Properties of the City and the Prince

6"You shall appoint as the property of the city *an area* five thousand *cubits* wide and twenty-five thousand long, adjacent to the district of the holy *section;* it shall belong to the whole house of Israel.

7"The prince shall have *a section* on one side and the other of the holy district and the city's property; and bordering on the holy district and the city's property, extending westward on the west side and eastward on the east side, the length *shall be* side by side with one of the *tribal* portions, from the west border to the east border. 8The land shall be his possession in Israel; and My princes shall no more oppress My people, but they shall give *the rest of* the land to the house of Israel, according to their tribes."

Laws Governing the Prince

9Thus says the Lord GOD: "Enough, O princes of Israel! Remove violence and plundering, execute justice and righteousness, and stop dispossessing My people," says the Lord GOD. 10"You shall have honest scales, an honest ephah, and an honest bath. 11The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, so that the bath contains one-tenth of a homer, and the ephah one-tenth of a homer; their measure shall be according to the homer. 12The shekel *shall be* twenty gerahs; twenty shekels, twenty-five shekels, *and* fifteen shekels shall be your mina.

13"This *is* the offering which you shall offer: you shall give one-sixth of an ephah from a homer of wheat, and one-sixth of an ephah from a homer of barley. 14The

45:5 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *a possession, cities of dwelling.*

ordinance concerning oil, the bath of oil, *is* one-tenth of a bath from a kor. A *kor is* a homer or ten baths, for ten baths *are* a homer. 15And one lamb shall be given from a flock of two hundred, from the rich pastures of Israel. These shall be for grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement for them," says the Lord GOD. 16"All the people of the land shall give this offering for the prince in Israel. 17Then it shall be the prince's part *to give* burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the New Moons, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed seasons of the house of Israel. He shall prepare the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel."

Fine music without devotion is but a splendid garment upon a corpse.

CHARLES SPURGEON

Keeping the Feasts

18Thus says the Lord GOD: "In the first *month,* on the first *day* of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish and cleanse the sanctuary. 19The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put *it* on the doorposts of the temple, on the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and on the gateposts of the gate of the inner court. 20And so you shall do on the seventh *day* of the month for everyone who has sinned unintentionally or in ignorance. Thus you shall make atonement for the temple.

21"In the first *month,* on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. 22And on that day the prince shall prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bull *for* a sin offering. 23On the seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bulls and seven rams without blemish, daily for seven days, and a kid of the goats daily *for* a sin offering. 24And he shall prepare a grain offering of one ephah for each bull and one ephah for each ram, together with a hin of oil for each ephah.

25"In the seventh *month,* on the fifteenth day of the month, at the feast, he shall do likewise for seven days, according to the sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the oil."

The Manner of Worship

46 Thus says the Lord GOD: "The gateway of the inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened. 2The prince shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway from the outside, and stand by the gatepost. The priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings. He shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening. 3Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway before the LORD on the Sabbaths and the New Moons. 4The burnt offering that the prince offers to the LORD on the Sabbath day *shall be* six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish; 5and the grain offering *shall be one* ephah for a ram, and the grain offering for the lambs, as much as he wants to give, as well as a hin of oil with every ephah. 6On the day of the New Moon *it shall be* a young bull without blemish, six lambs, and a ram; they shall be without blemish. 7He shall prepare a grain offering of an ephah for a bull, an ephah for a ram, as much as he wants to give for the lambs, and a hin of oil with every ephah. 8When the prince enters, he shall go in by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way.

9"But when the people of the land come before the LORD on the appointed feast days, whoever enters by way of the north gate to worship shall go out by way of the south gate; and whoever enters by way of the south gate shall go out by way of the north gate. He shall not return by way of the gate through which he came, but shall go out through the opposite gate. 10The prince shall then be in their midst. When they go in, he shall go in; and when they go out, he shall go out. 11At the festivals and the appointed feast days the grain offering shall be an ephah for a bull, an ephah for a ram, as much as he wants to give for the lambs, and a hin of oil with every ephah.

12 "Now when the prince makes a voluntary burnt offering or voluntary peace offering to the LORD, the gate that faces toward the east shall then be opened for him; and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings as he did on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he goes out the gate shall be shut.

13 "You shall daily make a burnt offering to the LORD *of* a lamb of the first year without blemish; you shall prepare it every morning. 14 And you shall prepare a grain offering with it every morning, a sixth of an ephah, and a third of a hin of oil to moisten the fine flour. This grain offering is a perpetual ordinance, to be made regularly to the LORD. 15 Thus they shall prepare the lamb, the grain offering, and the oil, *as* a regular burnt offering every morning."

The Prince and Inheritance Laws

16 "Thus says the Lord GOD: "If the prince gives a gift *of some* of his inheritance to any of his sons, it shall belong to his sons; it is their possession by inheritance. 17 But if he gives a gift of some of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his until the year of liberty, after which it shall return to the prince. But his inheritance shall belong to his sons; it shall become theirs. 18 Moreover the prince shall not take any of the people's inheritance by evicting them from their property; he shall provide an inheritance for his sons from his own property, so that none of My people may be scattered from his property." '"

How the Offerings Were Prepared

19 Now he brought me through the entrance, which *was* at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers of the priests which face toward the north; and there a place *was* situated at their extreme western end. 20 And he said to me, "This *is* the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering and the sin offering, *and* where they shall bake the grain offering, so that they do not bring *them* out into the outer court to sanctify the people."

21 Then he brought me out into the outer court and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and in fact, in every corner of the court *there was another* court. 22 In the four corners of the court *were* enclosed courts, forty *cubits* long and thirty wide; all four corners *were* the same size. 23 *There was* a row *of building stones* all around in them, all around the four of them; and cooking hearths were made under the rows of stones all around. 24 And he said to me, "These *are* the kitchens where the ministers of the temple shall boil the sacrifices of the people."

The Healing Waters and Trees

47 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. 2 He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.

3 And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* ankles. 4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water *came up to my* waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, *and it was* a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this?*" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, *were* very many trees on one side and the other. 8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. *When it* reaches the sea, *its* waters are healed. 9 And it shall be *that* every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10 It shall be *that* fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be *places* for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same

kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all *kinds of* trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."

Borders of the Land

13Thus says the Lord GOD: "These *are* the borders by which you shall divide the land as an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph *shall have two* portions. 14You shall inherit it equally with one another; for I raised My hand in an oath to give it to your fathers, and this land shall fall to you as your inheritance.

15"This *shall be* the border of the land on the north: from the Great Sea, *by* the road to Hethlon, as one goes to Zedad, 16Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim (which *is* between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), to Hazar Hatticon (which *is* on the border of Hauran). 17Thus the boundary shall be from the Sea to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus; and as for the north, northward, it is the border of Hamath. *This is* the north side.

18"On the east side you shall mark out the border from between Hauran and Damascus, and between Gilead and the land of Israel, along the Jordan, and along the eastern side of the sea. *This is* the east side.

19"The south side, toward the South,[a] *shall be* from Tamar to the waters of Meribah by Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. *This is* the south side, toward the South.

20"The west side *shall be* the Great Sea, from the *southern* boundary until one comes to a point opposite Hamath. This *is* the west side.

21"Thus you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. 22It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. 23And it shall be *that* in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give *him* his inheritance," says the Lord GOD.

Division of the Land

48 "Now these *are* the names of the tribes: From the northern border along the road to Hethlon at the entrance of Hamath, to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus northward, in the direction of Hamath, *there shall be* one *section for* Dan from its east to its west side; 2by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Asher; 3by the border of Asher, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Naphtali; 4by the border of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Manasseh; 5by the border of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Ephraim; 6by the border of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Reuben; 7by the border of Reuben, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Judah; 8by the border of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be the district which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand *cubits* in width, and *in* length the same as one of the *other* portions, from the east side to the west, with the sanctuary in the center.

9"The district that you shall set apart for the LORD *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits* in length and ten thousand in width. 10To these—to the priests—the holy district shall belong: on the north twenty-five thousand *cubits in length*, on the west ten thousand in width, on the east ten thousand in width, and on the south twenty-five thousand in length. The sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the center. 11*It shall be* for the priests of the sons of Zadok, who are sanctified, who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. 12And *this* district of land that is set apart shall be to them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.

13"Opposite the border of the priests, the Levites *shall have an area* twenty-five thousand *cubits* in length and ten thousand in width; its entire length *shall be* twenty-five thousand and its width ten thousand.

47:19 [a]Hebrew *Negev*

14 And they shall not sell or exchange any
of it; they may not alienate this best *part* of
the land, for *it is* holy to the LORD.
15 "The five thousand *cubits* in width
that remain, along the edge of the twenty-
five thousand, shall be for general use by
the city, for dwellings and common-land;
and the city shall be in the center. 16 These
shall be its measurements: the north side
four thousand five hundred *cubits,* the
south side four thousand five hundred, the
east side four thousand five hundred, and
the west side four thousand five hundred.
17 The common-land of the city shall be: to
the north two hundred and fifty *cubits,* to
the south two hundred and fifty, to the east
two hundred and fifty, and to the west two
hundred and fifty. 18 The rest of the length,
alongside the district of the holy *section,*
shall be ten thousand *cubits* to the east and
ten thousand to the west. It shall be adja-
cent to the district of the holy *section,* and
its produce shall be food for the workers of
the city. 19 The workers of the city, from all
the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. 20 The
entire district *shall be* twenty-five thousand
cubits by twenty-five thousand *cubits,* four-
square. You shall set apart the holy district
with the property of the city.
21 "The rest *shall belong* to the prince,
on one side and on the other of the holy
district and of the city's property, next to
the twenty-five thousand *cubits* of the *holy*
district as far as the eastern border, and
westward next to the twenty-five thousand
as far as the western border, adjacent to
the *tribal* portions; *it shall belong* to the
prince. It shall be the holy district, and the
sanctuary of the temple *shall be* in the cen-
ter. 22 Moreover, apart from the possession
of the Levites and the possession of the
city *which are* in the midst of what *belongs*
to the prince, *the area* between the border
of Judah and the border of Benjamin shall
belong to the prince.
23 "As for the rest of the tribes, from the
east side to the west, Benjamin *shall have*
one *section;* 24 by the border of Benjamin,
from the east side to the west, Simeon *shall*
have one *section;* 25 by the border of Simeon,
from the east side to the west, Issachar *shall*
have one *section;* 26 by the border of Issachar,
from the east side to the west, Zebulun *shall*
have one *section;* 27 by the border of Zebulun,
from the east side to the west, Gad *shall*
have one *section;* 28 by the border of Gad,
on the south side, toward the South,[a] the
border shall be from Tamar *to* the waters
of Meribah *by* Kadesh, along the brook to
the Great Sea. 29 This *is* the land which you
shall divide by lot as an inheritance among
the tribes of Israel, and these *are* their por-
tions," says the Lord GOD.

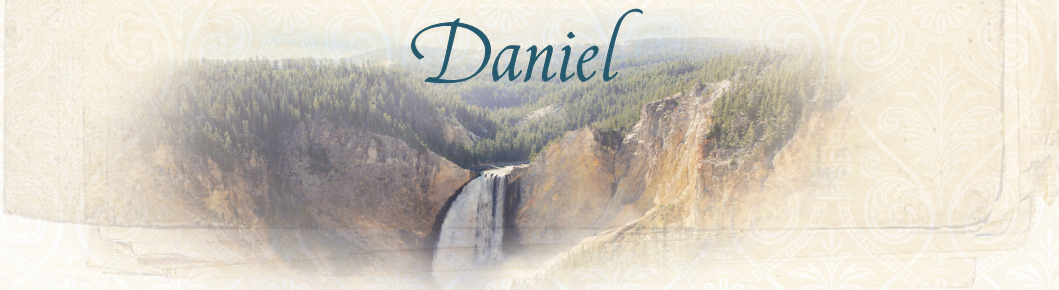
The Gates of the City and Its Name

30 "These *are* the exits of the city. On the
north side, measuring four thousand five
hundred *cubits* 31 (the gates of the city *shall*
be named after the tribes of Israel), the three
gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one
gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; 32 on
the east side, four thousand five hundred
cubits, three gates: one gate for Joseph, one
gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan;
33 on the south side, measuring four thou-
sand five hundred *cubits,* three gates: one
gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and
one gate for Zebulun; 34 on the west side,
four thousand five hundred *cubits* with
their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate
for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. 35 All
the way around *shall be* eighteen thousand
cubits; and the name of the city from *that*
day *shall be:* THE LORD *IS* THERE."[a]

48:28 [a]Hebrew *Negev* **48:35** [a]Hebrew *YHWH Shammah*

THE BOOK OF

Daniel



Daniel and His Friends Obey God

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim
king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of
Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged
it. [2]And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of
Judah into his hand, with some of the arti-
cles of the house of God, which he carried
into the land of Shinar to the house of his
god; and he brought the articles into the
treasure house of his god.

[3]Then the king instructed Ashpenaz,
the master of his eunuchs, to bring some
of the children of Israel and some of the
king's descendants and some of the nobles,
[4]young men in whom *there was* no blem-
ish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom,
possessing knowledge and quick to under-
stand, who *had* ability to serve in the king's
palace, and whom they might teach the
language and literature of the Chaldeans.
[5]And the king appointed for them a daily
provision of the king's delicacies and of the
wine which he drank, and three years of
training for them, so that at the end of *that
time* they might serve before the king. [6]Now
from among those of the sons of Judah were
Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. [7]To
them the chief of the eunuchs gave names:
he gave Daniel *the name* Belteshazzar; to
Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach;
and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

[8]But Daniel purposed in his heart
that he would not defile himself with the
portion of the king's delicacies, nor with
the wine which he drank; therefore he
requested of the chief of the eunuchs that
he might not defile himself. [9]Now God had
brought Daniel into the favor and good-
will of the chief of the eunuchs. [10]And the
chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear
my lord the king, who has appointed your
food and drink. For why should he see
your faces looking worse than the young
men who *are* your age? Then you would
endanger my head before the king."

[11]So Daniel said to the steward[a] whom
the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel,
Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, [12]"Please
test your servants for ten days, and let
them give us vegetables to eat and water to
drink. [13]Then let our appearance be exam-
ined before you, and the appearance of the
young men who eat the portion of the king's
delicacies; and as you see fit, *so* deal with
your servants." [14]So he consented with them
in this matter, and tested them ten days.

[15]And at the end of ten days their fea-
tures appeared better and fatter in flesh
than all the young men who ate the portion
of the king's delicacies. [16]Thus the steward
took away their portion of delicacies and
the wine that they were to drink, and gave
them vegetables.

[17]As for these four young men, God gave
them knowledge and skill in all literature
and wisdom; and Daniel had understand-
ing in all visions and dreams.

[18]Now at the end of the days, when the
king had said that they should be brought
in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them
in before Nebuchadnezzar. [19]Then the king
interviewed[a] them, and among them all none
was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael,
and Azariah; therefore they served before
the king. [20]And in all matters of wisdom *and*
understanding about which the king exam-
ined them, he found them ten times better
than all the magicians *and* astrologers who
were in all his realm. [21]Thus Daniel contin-
ued until the first year of King Cyrus.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 Now in the second year of Nebu-
chadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar
had dreams; and his spirit was *so* troubled

1:11 [a]Hebrew *Melzar,* also in verse 16 **1:19** [a]Literally *talked with them*

that his sleep left him. [2]Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. [3]And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

[4]Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic,[a] "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation."

[5]The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. [6]However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."

[7]They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation."

[8]The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: [9]if you do not make known the dream to me, *there is only* one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation."

[10]The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has *ever* asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. [11]*It is* a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

[12]For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. [13]So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise *men;* and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill *them.*

God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

[14]Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise *men* of Babylon; [15]he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

[16]So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. [17]Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known

2:4 [a]The original language of Daniel 2:4b through 7:28 is Aramaic.



BUDDY MULLINS • Homecoming Artist

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. | DANIEL 1:8

This was my life's verse during my teen years. For me it was my way of saying that I have consecrated my life to Christ—that I would not follow the path of least resistance, but I would devote my life to His will. Daniel's story proves when we choose God's way over what looks good to our flesh, we come out far better. I believe this must continue to be my life verse, for the temptation to choose the easy route is always present.

to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon. 19Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20Daniel answered and said:

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
For wisdom and might are His.
21 And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have understanding.
22 He reveals deep and secret things;
He knows what *is* in the darkness,
And light dwells with Him.

23 "I thank You and praise You,
O God of my fathers;
You have given me wisdom and might,
And have now made known to me what we asked of You,
For You have made known to us the king's demand."

Daniel Explains the Dream

24Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise *men* of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

25Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives[a] of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

26The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

27Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise *men,* the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. 28But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: 29As for you, O king, thoughts came *to* your *mind while* on your bed, *about* what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. 30But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for *our* sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

31"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor *was* excellent, stood before you; and its form *was* awesome. 32This image's head *was* of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs[a] of bronze, 33its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.[a] 34You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

36"This *is* the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37You, O king, *are* a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given *them* into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you *are* this head of gold. 39But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, *that kingdom* will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the

2:25 [a]Literally *of the sons of the captivity* **2:32** [a]Or *sides*
2:33 [a]Or *baked clay,* and so in verses 34, 35, and 42

strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42And *as* the toes of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

Daniel and His Friends Promoted

46Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. 47The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God *is* the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." 48Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon. 49Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel *sat* in the gate[a] of the king.

The Image of Gold

3 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* sixty cubits *and* its width six cubits. He set it

2:49 [a]That is, the king's court



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them. | DANIEL 3:25–27

Nobody wants to suffer. I know that I don't. But when it comes, I know that God has a lesson for me. There is a victory lesson to be learned through sufferings.

God did not just deliver the three Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, from the fiery furnace. He got in the furnace and went through the fire with them. When the king called for the three Hebrews to come

up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2And King Nebuchadnezzar sent *word* to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 3So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5*that* at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; 6and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

7So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, *and* lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down *and* worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Daniel's Friends Disobey the King

8Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. 9They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! 10You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; 11and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon:

forth out of the furnace, the king's court witnessed that the fire had no power over their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed. Neither were their coats singed, nor was the smell of the fire on them. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished, and he later acknowledged God as the only true God. Just imagine what this experience did in the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego! What a beautiful and thrilling testimony they must have shared everywhere.

In the furnace of cancer, I, too, learned more about the Savior. I learned about His love, His compassion, His knowledge, and His power to heal. Oh, what a Savior!

Steel is iron plus fire. Soil is rock plus heat or crushing. Linen is flax plus the bath that cleans, the comb that separates, the flail that pounds, and the shuttle that weaves. Human character must have a *plus* attached to it. The world does not forget great character. Great character is not made of luxury. Character is perfected in hard places.

Someday, God is going to reveal to all believers that the very hard times they once resisted have been the instruments He used in perfecting their character and molding them into perfection—polished stones for His great building yonder.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

13Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. 14Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "*Is it* true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *that* you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? 15Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, *good!* But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

16Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17If that *is the case,* our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. 18But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Saved in Fiery Trial

19Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *and* cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. 21Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. 23And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste *and* spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

25"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."[a]

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

26Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace *and* spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come *here*." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. 27And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

28Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel[a] and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! 29Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

30Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

4 Nebuchadnezzar the king,

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

2 I thought it good to declare the

3:25 [a]Or *a son of the gods* **3:28** [a]Or *angel*

signs and wonders that the Most
High God has worked for me.

3 How great *are* His signs,
And how mighty His wonders!
His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,
And His dominion *is* from generation
to generation.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my
house, and flourishing in my palace.
5 I saw a dream which made me
afraid, and the thoughts on my bed
and the visions of my head troubled
me. 6 Therefore I issued a decree to
bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon
before me, that they might make
known to me the interpretation of
the dream. 7 Then the magicians,
the astrologers, the Chaldeans,
and the soothsayers came in, and I
told them the dream; but they did
not make known to me its inter-
pretation. 8 But at last Daniel came
before me (his name *is* Belteshazzar,
according to the name of my god; in
him *is* the Spirit of the Holy God),
and I told the dream before him,
saying: 9 "Belteshazzar, chief of the
magicians, because I know that the
Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you, and
no secret troubles you, explain to
me the visions of my dream that I
have seen, and its interpretation.

10 "These *were* the visions of my head
while on my bed:

I was looking, and behold,
A tree in the midst of the earth,
And its height was great.
11 The tree grew and became strong;
Its height reached to the heavens,
And it could be seen to the ends of
all the earth.
12 Its leaves *were* lovely,
Its fruit abundant,
And in it *was* food for all.
The beasts of the field found shade
under it,
The birds of the heavens dwelt in
its branches,
And all flesh was fed from it.

13 "I saw in the visions of my head *while*
on my bed, and there was a watcher, a
holy one, coming down from heaven.
14 He cried aloud and said thus:

'Chop down the tree and cut off its
branches,
Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.
Let the beasts get out from under it,
And the birds from its branches.
15 Nevertheless leave the stump and
roots in the earth,
Bound with a band of iron and bronze,
In the tender grass of the field.
Let it be wet with the dew of heaven,
And *let* him graze with the beasts
On the grass of the earth.
16 Let his heart be changed from *that of*
a man,
Let him be given the heart of a beast,
And let seven times[a] pass over him.

17 'This decision *is* by the decree of the
watchers,
And the sentence by the word of the
holy ones,
In order that the living may know
That the Most High rules in the
kingdom of men,
Gives it to whomever He will,
And sets over it the lowest of men.'

18 "This dream I, King
Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now
you, Belteshazzar, declare its inter-
pretation, since all the wise *men* of
my kingdom are not able to make
known to me the interpretation;
but you *are* able, for the Spirit of
the Holy God *is* in you."

Daniel Explains the Second Dream

19 Then Daniel, whose name *was*
Belteshazzar, was astonished for a
time, and his thoughts troubled
him. *So* the king spoke, and said,
"Belteshazzar, do not let the dream
or its interpretation trouble you."
Belteshazzar answered and said,
"My lord, *may* the dream concern
those who hate you, and its inter-
pretation concern your enemies!

4:16 [a]Possibly *seven years*, and so in verses 23, 25, and 32

20 "The tree that you saw, which grew
and became strong, whose height
reached to the heavens and which
could be seen by all the earth,
21 whose leaves *were* lovely and its
fruit abundant, in which *was* food
for all, under which the beasts of the
field dwelt, and in whose branches
the birds of the heaven had their
home— 22 it *is* you, O king, who have
grown and become strong; for your
greatness has grown and reaches to
the heavens, and your dominion to
the end of the earth.

23 "And inasmuch as the king saw a
watcher, a holy one, coming down
from heaven and saying, 'Chop down
the tree and destroy it, but leave its
stump and roots in the earth, *bound*
with a band of iron and bronze in
the tender grass of the field; let it
be wet with the dew of heaven, and
let him graze with the beasts of the
field, till seven times pass over him';
24 this is the interpretation, O king,
and this is the decree of the Most
High, which has come upon my lord
the king: 25 They shall drive you from
men, your dwelling shall be with the
beasts of the field, and they shall
make you eat grass like oxen. They
shall wet you with the dew of heaven,
and seven times shall pass over you,
till you know that the Most High
rules in the kingdom of men, and
gives it to whomever He chooses.

26 "And inasmuch as they gave the
command to leave the stump *and*
roots of the tree, your kingdom
shall be assured to you, after you
come to know that Heaven rules.
27 Therefore, O king, let my advice
be acceptable to you; break off
your sins by *being* righteous, and
your iniquities by showing mercy
to *the* poor. Perhaps there may be a
lengthening of your prosperity."

Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation

28 All *this* came upon King Nebuchad-
nezzar. 29 At the end of the twelve
months he was walking about the
royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king
spoke, saying, "Is not this great
Babylon, that I have built for a royal
dwelling by my mighty power and
for the honor of my majesty?"

31 While the word *was still* in the king's
mouth, a voice fell from heaven:
"King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is
spoken: the kingdom has departed
from you! 32 And they shall drive you
from men, and your dwelling *shall*
be with the beasts of the field. They
shall make you eat grass like oxen;
and seven times shall pass over you,
until you know that the Most High
rules in the kingdom of men, and
gives it to whomever He chooses."

33 That very hour the word was ful-
filled concerning Nebuchadnezzar;
he was driven from men and ate
grass like oxen; his body was wet
with the dew of heaven till his hair
had grown like eagles' *feathers* and
his nails like birds' *claws.*

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

34 And at the end of the time[a] I,
Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes
to heaven, and my understanding
returned to me; and I blessed the
Most High and praised and hon-
ored Him who lives forever:

For His dominion *is* an everlasting
dominion,
And His kingdom *is* from generation to
generation.
35 All the inhabitants of the earth *are*
reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the
army of heaven
And *among* the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

36 At the same time my reason
returned to me, and for the glory of
my kingdom, my honor and splen-
dor returned to me. My counselors

4:34 [a]Literally *days*

and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works *are* truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

Belshazzar's Feast

5 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. 2While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which *had been* in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. 3Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which *had been* in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. 4They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.

5In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. 6Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other. 7The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise *men* of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and *have* a chain of gold around his neck; and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." 8Now all the king's wise *men* came, but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation. 9Then King Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.

10The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. 11There is a man in your kingdom in whom *is* the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* soothsayers. 12Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas[a] were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation."

The Writing on the Wall Explained

13Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, "*Are* you that Daniel who is one of the captives[a] from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? 14I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God *is* in you, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. 15Now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. 16And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and *have* a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

17Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. 19And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. 20But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.

5:12 [a]Literally *untying knots,* and so in verse 16 **5:13** [a]Literally *of the sons of the captivity*

Gospel Songs

And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

DANIEL 6:10

IF YOU comb through the Bible in search of the key to maintaining your relationship with God, you won't have to look long to find the answer: prayer. The Bible is full of people who sought the Lord daily in prayer: King David (Ps. 55:17), Daniel, Peter (Acts 10:9), and even Jesus—God Himself—took time to get away and seek the Father in prayer (Matt. 14:23). These men all demonstrated the truth that no matter how strong, wise, or energetic, no one can truly come to know God without a consistent prayer life. There's no better way to find relief from anxiety, solutions to your problems, strength to resist temptation, and joy to fill your heart than getting before God.

Another man who knew this well was William W. Walford. His story can best be told be told by Reverend Thomas Salmon, an English immigrant who wrote to the *The New York Observer*:

> *During my residence at Coleshill, Warwickshire, England, I became acquainted with W. W. Walford, the blind preacher, a man of obscure birth and connections and no education, but of strong mind and most retentive memory. In the pulpit he never failed to select a lesson well adapted to his subject, giving chapter and verse with unerring precision and scarcely ever misplacing a word in his repetition of the Psalms, every part of the New Testament, the prophecies, and some of the histories, so as to have the reputation of "knowing the whole Bible by heart." He actually sat in the chimney corner, employing his mind in composing a sermon or two for Sabbath delivery, and his hands in cutting, shaping and polishing bones for shoe horns and other little useful implements. At intervals he attempted poetry. On one occasion, paying him a visit, he repeated two or three pieces which he had composed, and having no friend at home to commit them to paper, he had laid them up in the storehouse within. "How will this do?" asked he, as he repeated the following lines, with a complacent smile touched with some light lines of fear lest he subject himself to criticism. I rapidly copied the lines with my pencil, as he uttered them, and sent them for insertion in the Observer, if you should think them worthy of preservation.*

Not only did the *Observer* find it worthy of preservation, but so did William Bradbury, who wrote the music fifteen years later, and so do countless Christians who continue to sing it.

Sweet Hour of Prayer

William W. Walford, 1845

1. *Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!*
That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known.
In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare,
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

2. *Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!*
The joys I feel, the bliss I share,
Of those whose anxious spirits burn
With strong desires for thy return!
With such I hasten to the place
Where God my Savior shows His face,
And gladly take my station there,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

3. *Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!*
Thy wings shall my petition bear
To Him whose truth and faithfulness
Engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since He bids me seek His face,
Believe His Word and trust His grace,
I'll cast on Him my every care,
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

4. *Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!*
May I thy consolation share,
Till, from Mount Pisgah's lofty height,
I view my home and take my flight.
This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise
To seize the everlasting prize,
And shout, while passing through the air,
"Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!"

21 Then he was driven from the sons of
men, his heart was made like the beasts,
and his dwelling *was* with the wild donkeys.
They fed him with grass like oxen, and his
body was wet with the dew of heaven, till
he knew that the Most High God rules in
the kingdom of men, and appoints over it
whomever He chooses.

22 "But you his son, Belshazzar, have not
humbled your heart, although you knew
all this. 23 And you have lifted yourself up
against the Lord of heaven. They have
brought the vessels of His house before you,
and you and your lords, your wives and your
concubines, have drunk wine from them.
And you have praised the gods of silver
and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone,
which do not see or hear or know; and the
God who *holds* your breath in His hand and
owns all your ways, you have not glorified.
24 Then the fingers[a] of the hand were sent
from Him, and this writing was written.

25 "And this is the inscription that was
written:

MENE,[a] MENE, TEKEL,[b] UPHARSIN.[c]

26 This *is* the interpretation of *each* word.
MENE: God has numbered your king-
dom, and finished it; 27 TEKEL: You have
been weighed in the balances, and found
wanting; 28 PERES: Your kingdom has
been divided, and given to the Medes
and Persians."[a] 29 Then Belshazzar gave the
command, and they clothed Daniel with
purple and *put* a chain of gold around his
neck, and made a proclamation concern-
ing him that he should be the third ruler
in the kingdom.

Belshazzar's Fall

30 That very night Belshazzar, king of
the Chaldeans, was slain. 31 And Darius the
Mede received the kingdom, *being* about
sixty-two years old.

The Plot Against Daniel

6 It pleased Darius to set over the king-
dom one hundred and twenty satraps, to
be over the whole kingdom; 2 and over these,
three governors, of whom Daniel *was* one,
that the satraps might give account to them,
so that the king would suffer no loss. 3 Then
this Daniel distinguished himself above the
governors and satraps, because an excellent
spirit *was* in him; and the king gave thought
to setting him over the whole realm. 4 So the
governors and satraps sought to find *some*
charge against Daniel concerning the king-
dom; but they could find no charge or fault,
because he *was* faithful; nor was there any
error or fault found in him. 5 Then these men
said, "We shall not find any charge against
this Daniel unless we find *it* against him
concerning the law of his God."

6 So these governors and satraps thronged
before the king, and said thus to him: "King
Darius, live forever! 7 All the governors of the
kingdom, the administrators and satraps,
the counselors and advisors, have consulted
together to establish a royal statute and to
make a firm decree, that whoever petitions
any god or man for thirty days, except you,
O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.
8 Now, O king, establish the decree and sign
the writing, so that it cannot be changed,
according to the law of the Medes and
Persians, which does not alter." 9 Therefore
King Darius signed the written decree.

Daniel in the Lions' Den

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writ-
ing was signed, he went home. And in his
upper room, with his windows open toward
Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees
three times that day, and prayed and gave
thanks before his God, as was his custom
since early days.

11 Then these men assembled and found
Daniel praying and making supplication
before his God. 12 And they went before
the king, and spoke concerning the king's
decree: "Have you not signed a decree that
every man who petitions any god or man
within thirty days, except you, O king, shall
be cast into the den of lions?"

The king answered and said, "The thing
is true, according to the law of the Medes
and Persians, which does not alter."

13 So they answered and said before the
king, "That Daniel, who is one of the cap-
tives[a] from Judah, does not show due regard
for you, O king, or for the decree that you

5:24 [a]Literally *palm* **5:25** [a]Literally *a mina* (50 shekels) from the verb "to number" [b]Literally *a shekel* from the verb "to weigh" [c]Literally *and half-shekels* from the verb "to divide" **5:28** [a]Aramaic *Paras,* consonant with *Peres* **6:13** [a]Literally *of the sons of the captivity*

have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

14And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

16So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast *him* into the den of lions. *But* the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." 17Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

Daniel Saved from the Lions

18Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians[a] were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. 19Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. 20And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

21Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! 22My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

23Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

Darius Honors God

24And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions—them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

25Then King Darius wrote:

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

26 I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom *men must* tremble
and fear before the God of Daniel.

For He *is* the living God,
And steadfast forever;
His kingdom *is the one* which shall not be destroyed,
And His dominion *shall endure* to the end.
27 He delivers and rescues,
And He works signs and wonders
In heaven and on earth,
Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

28So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Vision of the Four Beasts

7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head *while* on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.[a]

2Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

5"And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and *had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

6"After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron

6:18 [a]Exact meaning unknown **7:1** [a]Literally *the head* (or *chief*) *of the words*

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

DANIEL 7:13

The words to "Come, Thou Almighty King" were first published in George Whitefield's Collection of Hymns for Social Worship in 1757, but the official writer of it is unknown—and perhaps for good reason. As a congregation of colonists were worshiping in Long Island during the American Revolution, a group of Hessian troops interrupted the service, and the captain commanded the people to sing "God Save the King." Rather than obeying their orders, the patriotic congregation sang the words to this hymn instead, to the same tune as "God Save the King." After that, "Come, Thou Almighty King" was commonly sung to the tune of "God Save the King," which is the same as "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." Though never included in any English Methodist hymnals, "Come, Thou Almighty King" became a widely popularized church song among American Methodists, as well as other denominations. It may have historical significance for Americans, but the song expresses loyalty to the one true King, and that praise is absolutely universal.

Come, Thou Almighty King

Author Unknown | Published in 1757

1. Come, Thou almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing,
Help us to praise:
Father, all glorious,
O'er all victorious,
Come, and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

2. Come, Thou Incarnate Word,
Gird on Thy mighty sword,
Our prayer attend:
Come, and Thy people bless,
And give Thy word success;
Spirit of holiness,
On us descend!

3. Come, Holy Comforter,
Thy sacred witness bear
In this glad hour:
Thou who almighty art,
Now rule in every heart,
Never from us depart,
Spirit of power.

4. To Thee, great One in Three,
The highest praises be,
Hence evermore!
Thy sovereign majesty
May we in glory see,
And to eternity
Love and adore.

teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It *was* different from all the beasts that *were* before it, and it had ten horns. 8I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

Vision of the Ancient of Days

9 "I watched till thrones were put in place,
And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment *was* white as snow,
And the hair of His head *was* like
pure wool.
His throne *was* a fiery flame,
Its wheels a burning fire;
10 A fiery stream issued
And came forth from before Him.
A thousand thousands ministered
to Him;
Ten thousand times ten thousand
stood before Him.
The court[a] was seated,
And the books were opened.

11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 "I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near
before Him.
14 Then to Him was given dominion and
glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and
languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting
dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel's Visions Interpreted

15 "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17'Those great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings[a] *which* arise out of the earth. 18But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'

19 "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, *with* its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, *which* devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20and the ten horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance *was* greater than his fellows.

21 "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

23 "Thus he said:

'The fourth beast shall be
A fourth kingdom on earth,
Which shall be different from all *other*
kingdoms,
And shall devour the whole earth,
Trample it and break it in pieces.
24 The ten horns *are* ten kings
Who shall arise from this kingdom.
And another shall rise after them;
He shall be different from the first *ones,*
And shall subdue three kings.
25 He shall speak *pompous* words against
the Most High,
Shall persecute[a] the saints of the
Most High,
And shall intend to change times
and law.
Then *the saints* shall be given into
his hand
For a time and times and half a time.

7:10 [a]Or *judgment* **7:17** [a]Representing their kingdoms (compare verse 23)
7:25 [a]Literally *wear out*

26 'But the court shall be seated,
And they shall take away his dominion,
To consume and destroy *it* forever.
27 Then the kingdom and dominion,
And the greatness of the kingdoms
under the whole heaven,
Shall be given to the people, the saints
of the Most High.
His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,
And all dominions shall serve and
obey Him.'

28 "This *is* the end of the account.[a] As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart."

Vision of a Ram and a Goat

8 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared *to* me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time. 2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I *was* in Shushan, the citadel, which *is* in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. 3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns *were* high; but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher *one* came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor *was there any* that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes. 6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. 7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

8 Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. 9 And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious *Land.* 10 And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and *some* of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. 11 He even exalted *himself* as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily *sacrifices* were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. 12 Because of transgression, an army was given over *to the horn* to oppose the daily *sacrifices;* and he cast truth down to the ground. He did *all this* and prospered.

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, "How long *will* the vision *be, concerning* the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?"

14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days;[a] then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

15 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of* the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this *man* understand the vision." 17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision *refers* to the time of the end."

18 Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. 19 And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end *shall be.* 20 The ram which you saw, having the two horns—*they are* the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the male goat *is* the kingdom[a] of Greece. The large horn that *is* between its eyes *is* the first king. 22 As for the broken *horn* and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

7:28 [a]Literally *the word* **8:14** [a]Literally *evening-mornings*
8:21 [a]Literally *king,* representing his kingdom (compare 7:17, 23)

23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom,
When the transgressors have reached their fullness,
A king shall arise,
Having fierce features,
Who understands sinister schemes.
24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;
He shall destroy fearfully,
And shall prosper and thrive;
He shall destroy the mighty, and *also* the holy people.

25 "Through his cunning
He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule;[a]
And he shall exalt *himself* in his heart.
He shall destroy many in *their* prosperity.
He shall even rise against the Prince of princes;
But he shall be broken without *human* means.[b]

26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings
Which was told is true;
Therefore seal up the vision,
For *it refers* to many days *in the future*."

27 And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

Daniel's Prayer for the People

9 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. 6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us shame of face, as *it is* this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

8 "O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. 10 We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. 12 And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

13 "As *it is* written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as *it is* this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

16 "O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our

8:25 [a]Literally *hand* [b]Literally *hand*

fathers, Jerusalem and Your people *are* a reproach to all *those* around us. 17Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy

20Now while I *was* speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21yes, while I *was* speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22And he informed *me,* and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell *you,* for you *are* greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

24 "Seventy weeks[a] are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of[b] sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.

25 "Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street[a] shall be built again, and the wall,[b]
Even in troublesome times.

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.
27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate."

Vision of the Glorious Man

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message *was* true, but the appointed time *was* long;[a] and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. 2In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

4Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that *is,* the Tigris,[a] 5I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist *was* girded with gold of Uphaz! 6His body *was* like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

7And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. 9Yet I heard the

9:24 [a]Literally *sevens,* and so throughout the chapter [b]Following Qere, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Kethib and Theodotion read *To seal up.*
9:25 [a]Or *open square* [b]Or *moat* **10:1** [a]Or *and of great conflict*
10:4 [a]Hebrew *Hiddekel*

sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

In my music, silence is just as important as the notes. There is an aspect of music, of sacred music, that can speak the unspeakable.

MICHAEL TALBOT

Prophecies Concerning Persia and Greece

10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and *on* the palms of my hands. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision *refers* to *many* days yet *to come*."

15 When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And suddenly, *one* having the likeness of the sons[a] of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."

18 Then again, *the one* having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. 19 And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace *be* to you; be strong, yes, be strong!"

So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

11 "Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, *even* I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.) 2 And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than *them* all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece. 3 Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. 4 And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.

Warring Kings of North and South

5 "Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as *one* of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion *shall be* a great dominion. 6 And at the end of *some* years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority,[a] and neither he nor his authority[b] shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in *those* times. 7 But from a branch of her roots *one* shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail. 8 And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes[a] *and* their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue *more* years than the king of the North.

9 "Also *the king of the North* shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land. 10 However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble

10:16 [a]Theodotion and Vulgate read *the son;* Septuagint reads *a hand.*
11:6 [a]Literally *arm* [b]Literally *arm* **11:8** [a]Or *molded images*

a multitude of great forces; and *one* shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife.

11"And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his *enemy.* 12When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail. 13For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.

14"Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men[a] of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall. 15So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces[a] of the South shall not withstand *him.* Even his choice troops *shall have* no strength to resist. 16But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.[a]

17"He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones[a] with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand *with him,* or be for him. 18After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him. 19Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

20"There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes *on* the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle. 21And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. 22With the force[a] of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant. 23And after the league *is made* with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small *number of* people. 24He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do *what* his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but *only* for a time.

25"He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. 26Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. 27Both these kings' hearts *shall be* bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end *will* still *be* at the appointed time. 28While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be *moved* against the holy covenant; so he shall do *damage* and return to his own land.

The Northern King's Blasphemies

29"At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. 30For ships from Cyprus[a] shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do *damage.*

"So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. 31And forces[a] shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices,* and place *there* the abomination of desolation. 32Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits.* 33And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet *for many* days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. 34Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. 35And *some* of those of understand-

11:14 [a]Or *robbers,* literally *sons of breakage* **11:15** [a]Literally *arms*
11:16 [a]Literally *hand* **11:17** [a]Or *bring equitable terms* **11:22** [a]Literally *arms*
11:30 [a]Hebrew *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus
11:31 [a]Literally *arms*

ing shall fall, to refine them, purify *them,* and make *them* white, *until* the time of the end; because *it is* still for the appointed time.

36"Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. 37He shall regard neither the God[a] of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above *them* all. 38But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. 39Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, *and* advance *its* glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

The Northern King's Conquests

40"At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm *them,* and pass through. 41He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. 42He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians *shall follow* at his heels. 44But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. 45And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

Prophecy of the End Time

12 "At that time Michael shall stand up,
The great prince who stands *watch*
over the sons of your people;
And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was
a nation,
Even to that time.
And at that time your people shall be
delivered,
Every one who is found written in the
book.
2 And many of those who sleep in the
dust of the earth shall awake,
Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame *and* everlasting
contempt.
3 Those who are wise shall shine
Like the brightness of the firmament,
And those who turn many to
righteousness
Like the stars forever and ever.

4"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

5Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. 6And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders *be?*"

7Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that *it shall be* for a time, times, and half *a time;* and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these *things* shall be finished.

8Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things?*"

9And he said, "Go *your way,* Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

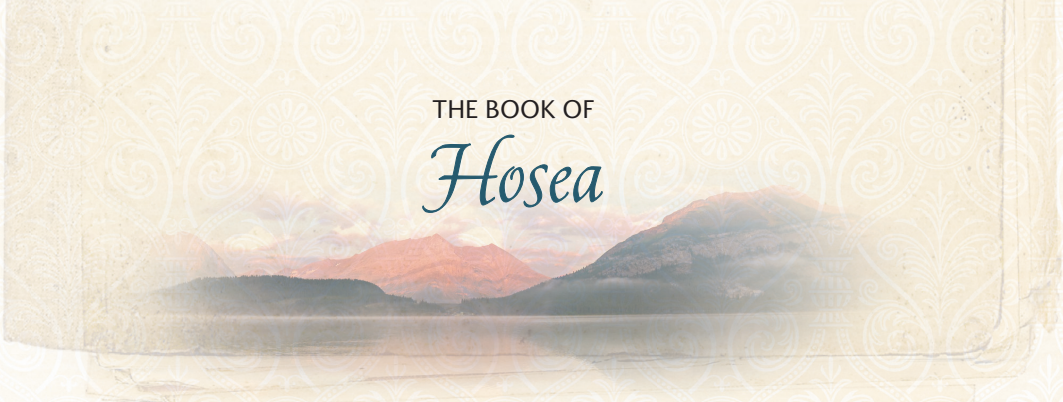
11"And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there shall be* one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12Blessed *is* he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

13"But you, go *your way* till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

11:37 [a]Or *gods*

THE BOOK OF

Hosea



1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

The Family of Hosea

2 When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea:

"Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry
And children of harlotry,
For the land has committed great harlotry
By departing from the LORD."

3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. 4 Then the LORD said to him:

"Call his name Jezreel,
For in a little *while*
I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu,
And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.
5 It shall come to pass in that day
That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

6 And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then *God* said to him:

"Call her name Lo-Ruhamah,[a]
For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel,
But I will utterly take them away.[b]
7 Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah,
Will save them by the LORD their God,
And will not save them by bow,
Nor by sword or battle,
By horses or horsemen."

8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then *God* said:

"Call his name Lo-Ammi,[a]
For you *are* not My people,
And I will not be your *God*.

The Restoration of Israel

10 "Yet the number of the children of Israel
Shall be as the sand of the sea,
Which cannot be measured or numbered.
And it shall come to pass
In the place where it was said to them,
'You *are* not My people,'[a]
There it shall be said to them,
'*You are* sons of the living God.'
11 Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel
Shall be gathered together,
And appoint for themselves one head;
And they shall come up out of the land,
For great *will be* the day of Jezreel!
2 Say to your brethren, 'My people,'[a]
And to your sisters, 'Mercy[b] *is shown*.'

God's Unfaithful People

2 "Bring charges against your mother, bring charges;
For she *is* not My wife, nor *am* I her Husband!
Let her put away her harlotries from her sight,
And her adulteries from between her breasts;
3 Lest I strip her naked
And expose her, as in the day she was born,
And make her like a wilderness,

1:6 [a]Literally *No-Mercy* [b]Or *That I may forgive them at all* **1:9** [a]Literally *Not-My-People* **1:10** [a]Hebrew *lo-ammi* (compare verse 9) **2:1** [a]Hebrew *Ammi* (compare 1:9, 10) [b]Hebrew *Ruhamah* (compare 1:6)

And set her like a dry land,
And slay her with thirst.

4 "I will not have mercy on her children,
For they *are* the children of harlotry.
5 For their mother has played the harlot;
She who conceived them has behaved shamefully.
For she said, 'I will go after my lovers,
Who give *me* my bread and my water,
My wool and my linen,
My oil and my drink.'

6 "Therefore, behold,
I will hedge up your way with thorns,
And wall her in,
So that she cannot find her paths.
7 She will chase her lovers,
But not overtake them;
Yes, she will seek them, but not find *them*.
Then she will say,
'I will go and return to my first husband,
For then *it was* better for me than now.'
8 For she did not know
That I gave her grain, new wine, and oil,
And multiplied her silver and gold—
Which they prepared for Baal.

9 "Therefore I will return and take away
My grain in its time
And My new wine in its season,
And will take back My wool and My linen,
Given to cover her nakedness.
10 Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers,
And no one shall deliver her from My hand.
11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease,
Her feast days,
Her New Moons,
Her Sabbaths—
All her appointed feasts.

12 "And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees,
Of which she has said,
'These *are* my wages that my lovers have given me.'
So I will make them a forest,
And the beasts of the field shall eat them.
13 I will punish her
For the days of the Baals to which she burned incense.
She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry,
And went after her lovers;
But Me she forgot," says the LORD.

I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.
HOSEA 2:15

God's Mercy on His People

14 "Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Will bring her into the wilderness,
And speak comfort to her.
15 I will give her her vineyards from there,
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;
She shall sing there,
As in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

16 "And it shall be, in that day,"
Says the LORD,
"*That* you will call Me 'My Husband,'[a]
And no longer call Me 'My Master,'[b]
17 For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,
And they shall be remembered by their name no more.
18 In that day I will make a covenant for them
With the beasts of the field,
With the birds of the air,
And *with* the creeping things of the ground.
Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,
To make them lie down safely.

19 "I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;

2:16 [a]Hebrew *Ishi* [b]Hebrew *Baali*

Peace Prize

GLORIA GAITHER

Pax Romanas and Shalom
A peace accord just signed
Between Iraq and the Iranians
A pipe of brotherhood once passed
Between the Sioux and Iroquois
Then handed off in careful trust
Into the white man's hand
A double Russian kiss
I saw tonight on Network News
That reminisced of Judas
And Gethsemane.
"My peace I leave with you"
Is heard above the sound of
tearing bread
"But not *that* kind of peace,
The kind the world will promise."
Pursue it as you will
Down dusty roads and paved
interstates,
Through strategic canals
And international waterways.
Chase it down the pipelines
And the U.N.'s marble corridors.
Follow its promise to Bermuda,
Figi, and sinus dry Scottsdale.
In and out of marriage license
bureaus
And domestic courts,
Pursue it past the "if onlys"
And "what if's" of your excuse.
Chase it 'til your nose bleeds
And your joints crumble
And your children curse
The Polos and the Saabs
You've given them.
Romans, Hebrews,
Indians, Gold Rushers,
Gold Coasters, politicians,
Negotiators, academics,
sophisticates—
Chase it 'til you're green,
Or red, white, and blue,
Peace will remain illusive
'Til you see that it's a Person
Who's been pursuing you.

20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,
And you shall know the LORD.

21 "It shall come to pass in that day
That I will answer," says the LORD;
"I will answer the heavens,
And they shall answer the earth.
22 The earth shall answer
With grain,
With new wine,
And with oil;
They shall answer Jezreel.[a]
23 Then I will sow her for Myself in
the earth,
And I will have mercy on *her who had*
not obtained mercy;[a]
Then I will say to *those who were* not
My people,[b]
'You *are* My people!'
And they shall say, '*You are* my God!'"

Israel Will Return to God

3 Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman *who is* loved by a lover[a] and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love *the* raisin cakes *of the pagans*."

2So I bought her for myself for fifteen *shekels* of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. 3And I said to her, "You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, *will* I *be* toward you."

4For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or *sacred* pillar, without ephod or teraphim. 5Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.

God's Charge Against Israel

4 Hear the word of the LORD,
You children of Israel,
For the LORD *brings* a charge against
the inhabitants of the land:

"There is no truth or mercy
Or knowledge of God in the land.
2 *By* swearing and lying,
Killing and stealing and committing
adultery,
They break all restraint,
With bloodshed upon bloodshed.
3 Therefore the land will mourn;
And everyone who dwells there will
waste away
With the beasts of the field
And the birds of the air;
Even the fish of the sea will be
taken away.

4 "Now let no man contend, or rebuke
another;
For your people *are* like those who
contend with the priest.
5 Therefore you shall stumble in the day;
The prophet also shall stumble with
you in the night;
And I will destroy your mother.
6 My people are destroyed for lack of
knowledge.
Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also will reject you from being priest
for Me;
Because you have forgotten the law of
your God,
I also will forget your children.

7 "The more they increased,
The more they sinned against Me;
I will change[a] their glory[b] into shame.
8 They eat up the sin of My people;
They set their heart on their iniquity.
9 And it shall be: like people, like priest.
So I will punish them for their ways,
And reward them for their deeds.
10 For they shall eat, but not have enough;
They shall commit harlotry, but not
increase;
Because they have ceased obeying
the LORD.

The Idolatry of Israel

11 "Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave
the heart.
12 My people ask counsel from their
wooden *idols*,
And their staff informs them.
For the spirit of harlotry has caused
them to stray,

2:22 [a]Literally *God Will Sow* **2:23** [a]Hebrew *lo-ruhamah* [b]Hebrew *lo-ammi*
3:1 [a]Literally *friend* or *husband* **4:7** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; scribal tradition, Syriac, and Targum read *They will change*. [b]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; scribal tradition reads *My glory*.

And they have played the harlot
against their God.
13 They offer sacrifices on the
mountaintops,
And burn incense on the hills,
Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths,
Because their shade *is* good.
Therefore your daughters commit
harlotry,
And your brides commit adultery.

14 "I will not punish your daughters when
they commit harlotry,
Nor your brides when they commit
adultery;
For *the men* themselves go apart with
harlots,
And offer sacrifices with a ritual
harlot.[a]
Therefore people *who* do not
understand will be trampled.

15 "Though you, Israel, play the harlot,
Let not Judah offend.
Do not come up to Gilgal,
Nor go up to Beth Aven,
Nor swear an oath, *saying,* 'As the LORD
lives'—

16 "For Israel is stubborn
Like a stubborn calf;
Now the LORD will let them forage
Like a lamb in open country.

17 "Ephraim *is* joined to idols,
Let him alone.
18 Their drink is rebellion,
They commit harlotry continually.
Her rulers dearly[a] love dishonor.
19 The wind has wrapped her up in its
wings,
And they shall be ashamed because
of their sacrifices.

Impending Judgment on Israel and Judah

5 "Hear this, O priests!
Take heed, O house of Israel!
Give ear, O house of the king!
For yours *is* the judgment,
Because you have been a snare to Mizpah
And a net spread on Tabor.
2 The revolters are deeply involved in
slaughter,
Though I rebuke them all.
3 I know Ephraim,
And Israel is not hidden from Me;
For now, O Ephraim, you commit
harlotry;
Israel is defiled.

4 "They do not direct their deeds
Toward turning to their God,
For the spirit of harlotry is in their midst,
And they do not know the LORD.
5 The pride of Israel testifies to his face;
Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble
in their iniquity;
Judah also stumbles with them.

6 "With their flocks and herds
They shall go to seek the LORD,
But they will not find *Him;*
He has withdrawn Himself from them.
7 They have dealt treacherously with
the LORD,
For they have begotten pagan children.
Now a New Moon shall devour them
and their heritage.

8 "Blow the ram's horn in Gibeah,
The trumpet in Ramah!
Cry aloud *at* Beth Aven,
'*Look* behind you, O Benjamin!'
9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day
of rebuke;
Among the tribes of Israel I make
known what is sure.

10 "The princes of Judah are like those
who remove a landmark;
I will pour out My wrath on them like
water.
11 Ephraim is oppressed *and* broken in
judgment,
Because he willingly walked by *human*
precept.
12 Therefore I *will be* to Ephraim like a moth,
And to the house of Judah like
rottenness.

13 "When Ephraim saw his sickness,
And Judah *saw* his wound,
Then Ephraim went to Assyria
And sent to King Jareb;
Yet he cannot cure you,

4:14 [a]Compare Deuteronomy 23:18 **4:18** [a]Hebrew is difficult; a Jewish tradition reads *Her rulers shamefully love, 'Give!'*

I'll Worship Only at the Feet of Jesus

I went to visit the shrine of plenty
But found its storerooms all filled with dust.
I bowed at altars of gold and silver,
But as I knelt there, they turned to rust.

So I'll worship only at the feet of Jesus;
His cup alone: my Holy Grail.
There are no other gods before Him.
Just Jesus only will never fail.

The call of fortune made me a pilgrim
To journey to fame's promised heights.
But as I climbed, the promise faded,
And wind blew lonely through the night.
Just desert dust and empty shadow:
All promises that turn to lies.
The gods of earth fail and betray me.
You alone are my Truth and Life.

So I'll worship only at the feet of Jesus;
His cup alone: my Holy Grail.
There are no other gods before Him.
Just Jesus only will never fail.

Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth.

HOSEA 6:1–3

It is curious to most new-millennium minds that the first and greatest commandment for both Judaism and Christianity is "You shall have no other gods before me" (Deut. 5:7). Jesus echoed this commandment when He summed up all the Law and the prophets and encapsulated His own mission statement by saying, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind," and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37, 39).

The old word for what the commandments forbid is *idolatry*. Since we don't live in a multideity culture, we tend to think we aren't idolaters. Graven images, sun gods, moon goddesses, sacrifices to the Nile River, sacred cows: all these seem ridiculous to most religious American minds. "Of course we worship the one true God! Idolatry was in another time, in another place, right?"

In his book *Addiction and Grace*, Gerald May confronts our self-righteousness and calls it "addiction," another word for idolatry: "It is addiction that keeps our love for God and neighbors incomplete. It is addiction that creates other gods for us. Because of our addictions, we will always be storing up treasure somewhere other than heaven, and these treasures will kidnap our hearts and souls and strength."

We counter immediately, "I've never been addicted. I've never abused drugs. I'm not an alcoholic." Yet in truth, attachments to things and relationships other than God Himself usher us unwittingly into what Gerald May calls "addictions that make idolaters of us all."

Idolatry is the opposite of freedom. Jesus said, "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). He is personified truth. And anything that entices us away from Him—even so-called good things—can beguile and addict us. Anything that becomes our pleasure center, taking the place of God as our measuring stick for joy, is addicting and idolatrous. Sadly, this loss of balance, this skewing of focus, is capable of eventually destroying the very pleasure it seems at first to deliver.

I have a habit of reading ads and listening to commercials. Ad agencies are pros at naming the deep spiritual needs we all share, then tying those needs to a promise of fulfillment through some product. What do we need: Acceptance? Happiness? Peace? A place to belong?

Security? Love? To be valued? Things that promise to satisfy our longings are standing in line. Our economy is fueled our being convinced us we can't live without products that didn't exist a decade ago, last year, last month!

Yet we drive the cars, furnish our houses with the couch and easy chair, cover our floors with the carpet or hardwood, send our kids to the schools, wear the designer lines and the makeup, carry the leather briefcases, and only grow more restless and empty.

Few of us would actually admit that we think products and artifacts could ever satisfy the hungers of the soul, yet Christians and non-Christians alike find it nearly impossible to resist the beguiling promises of an easy fix and then truly simplify our lives, refocus our affections, and embrace unadulterated truth without fear or hesitation.

Sadly, instead of keeping God the measuring stick for all joy and pleasure, we all too often let our addictions become the measuring stick for God. We attach our spiritual hungers to the things we invent to express our worship—our style, modes of expression, theological systems, certain emotional or cerebral or artistic experiences connected with religion.

Some of us have fallen for the high we get from doing good, helping others, for being applauded in one way or another. Our god might be building churches, holding meetings, influencing and motivating audiences, creating beautiful liturgy, evangelizing the neighborhood, feeding the poor. As good as these things are, they are not God Himself.

No wonder Jesus said to those who scoffed at Mary for "wasting" the precious perfume of her love at the feet of the Master, "She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always" (Matt. 26:10, 11). He knew that helping the poor naturally results from adoring Him, but when helping the poor becomes the focus, it turns us into idolaters who have lost the joy of the journey with Him.

In the classic tales of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, Arthur searches for the Holy Grail—the cup that his Lord had offered to His friends that night in the Upper Room. It becomes a tangible reminder to Arthur and his knights to drink the cup of sacrifice and service, calling them to righteous living and noble deeds.

The search leads them into all kinds of adventures and conquests. In the process, the search for the grail becomes such an all-consuming quest that the dear Lord Himself fades from view. As good as these men aspire to be, as urgent as their search becomes, they lose sight of the face of Jesus and His hands that held the cup.

The Book of Hosea the prophet is a call to all who have ever gone off on adventures of misplaced affection. A dear yearning in the voice of God rings even through the warnings of destruction. Listen to the lover of our hearts: "I don't want your sacrifices—I want your love; I don't want your offerings—I want you to know me. . . . O Judah, for you also there is a plentiful harvest of punishment waiting—and I wanted so much to bless you!" (Hos. 6:6, 11 TLB).

But what a merciful God we have! In spite of our unfaithful fickle hearts, His love calls us always back to the true center where we can find healing and wholeness. His resurrection has brought us the cup of joy.



Nor heal you of your wound.
14 For I *will be* like a lion to Ephraim,
And like a young lion to the house of Judah.
I, *even* I, will tear *them* and go away;
I will take *them* away, and no one shall rescue.
15 I will return again to My place
Till they acknowledge their offense.
Then they will seek My face;
In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."

A Call to Repentance

6 Come, and let us return to the LORD;
For He has torn, but He will heal us;
He has stricken, but He will bind us up.
2 After two days He will revive us;
On the third day He will raise us up,
That we may live in His sight.
3 Let us know,
Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD.
His going forth is established as the morning;
He will come to us like the rain,
Like the latter *and* former rain to the earth.

Impenitence of Israel and Judah

4 "O Ephraim, what shall I do to you?
O Judah, what shall I do to you?
For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud,
And like the early dew it goes away.
5 Therefore I have hewn *them* by the prophets,
I have slain them by the words of My mouth;
And your judgments *are like* light *that* goes forth.
6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice,
And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

7 "But like men[a] they transgressed the covenant;
There they dealt treacherously with Me.
8 Gilead *is* a city of evildoers
And defiled with blood.
9 As bands of robbers lie in wait for a man,
So the company of priests murder on the way to Shechem;
Surely they commit lewdness.
10 I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel:
There *is* the harlotry of Ephraim;
Israel is defiled.
11 Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed for you,
When I return the captives of My people.

7 "When I would have healed Israel,
Then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered,
And the wickedness of Samaria.
For they have committed fraud;
A thief comes in;
A band of robbers takes spoil outside.
2 They do not consider in their hearts
That I remember all their wickedness;
Now their own deeds have surrounded them;
They are before My face.
3 They make a king glad with their wickedness,
And princes with their lies.

4 "They *are* all adulterers.
Like an oven heated by a baker—
He ceases stirring *the fire* after kneading the dough,
Until it is leavened.
5 In the day of our king
Princes have made *him* sick, inflamed with wine;
He stretched out his hand with scoffers.
6 They prepare their heart like an oven,
While they lie in wait;
Their baker[a] sleeps all night;
In the morning it burns like a flaming fire.
7 They are all hot, like an oven,
And have devoured their judges;
All their kings have fallen.
None among them calls upon Me.

8 "Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples;
Ephraim is a cake unturned.
9 Aliens have devoured his strength,
But he does not know *it;*
Yes, gray hairs are here and there on him,
Yet he does not know *it*.
10 And the pride of Israel testifies to his face,

6:7 [a]Or *like Adam* **7:6** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *Their anger;* Septuagint reads *Ephraim.*

But they do not return to the LORD
their God,
Nor seek Him for all this.

Futile Reliance on the Nations

11 "Ephraim also is like a silly dove,
without sense—
They call to Egypt,
They go to Assyria.
12 Wherever they go, I will spread My
net on them;
I will bring them down like birds of
the air;
I will chastise them
According to what their congregation
has heard.

13 "Woe to them, for they have fled
from Me!
Destruction to them,
Because they have transgressed
against Me!
Though I redeemed them,
Yet they have spoken lies against Me.
14 They did not cry out to Me with their
heart
When they wailed upon their beds.

"They assemble together for[a] grain and
new wine,
They rebel against Me;[b]
15 Though I disciplined *and* strengthened
their arms,
Yet they devise evil against Me;
16 They return, *but* not to the Most High;[a]
They are like a treacherous bow.
Their princes shall fall by the sword
For the cursings of their tongue.
This *shall be* their derision in the land
of Egypt.

The Apostasy of Israel

8 "*Set* the trumpet[a] to your mouth!
He shall come like an eagle against the
house of the LORD,
Because they have transgressed My
covenant
And rebelled against My law.
2 Israel will cry to Me,
'My God, we know You!'
3 Israel has rejected the good;
The enemy will pursue him.
4 "They set up kings, but not by Me;
They made princes, but I did not
acknowledge *them.*
From their silver and gold
They made idols for themselves—
That they might be cut off.
5 Your calf is rejected, O Samaria!
My anger is aroused against them—
How long until they attain to innocence?
6 For from Israel *is* even this:
A workman made it, and it *is* not God;
But the calf of Samaria shall be broken
to pieces.

7 "They sow the wind,
And reap the whirlwind.
The stalk has no bud;
It shall never produce meal.
If it should produce,
Aliens would swallow it up.
8 Israel is swallowed up;
Now they are among the Gentiles
Like a vessel in which *is* no pleasure.
9 For they have gone up to Assyria,
Like a wild donkey alone by itself;
Ephraim has hired lovers.
10 Yes, though they have hired among the
nations,
Now I will gather them;
And they shall sorrow a little,[a]
Because of the burden[b] of the king of
princes.

11 "Because Ephraim has made many
altars for sin,
They have become for him altars for
sinning.
12 I have written for him the great things
of My law,
But they were considered a strange thing.
13 *For* the sacrifices of My offerings they
sacrifice flesh and eat *it,*
But the LORD does not accept them.
Now He will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins.
They shall return to Egypt.

14 "For Israel has forgotten his Maker,
And has built temples;[a]

7:14 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Vulgate reads *thought upon;* Septuagint reads *slashed themselves for* (compare 1 Kings 18:28). [b]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Targum; Septuagint omits *They rebel against Me;* Vulgate reads *They departed from Me.*
7:16 [a]Or *upward* **8:1** [a]Hebrew *shophar,* ram's horn **8:10** [a]Or *begin to diminish* [b]Or *oracle* **8:14** [a]Or *palaces*

Judah also has multiplied fortified cities;
But I will send fire upon his cities,
And it shall devour his palaces."

Judgment of Israel's Sin

9 Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like *other* peoples,
For you have played the harlot against your God.
You have made love *for* hire on every threshing floor.
2 The threshing floor and the winepress
Shall not feed them,
And the new wine shall fail in her.

3 They shall not dwell in the LORD's land,
But Ephraim shall return to Egypt,
And shall eat unclean *things* in Assyria.
4 They shall not offer wine *offerings* to the LORD,
Nor shall their sacrifices be pleasing to Him.
It shall be like bread of mourners to them;
All who eat it shall be defiled.
For their bread *shall be* for their *own* life;
It shall not come into the house of the LORD.

5 What will you do in the appointed day,
And in the day of the feast of the LORD?
6 For indeed they are gone because of destruction.
Egypt shall gather them up;
Memphis shall bury them.
Nettles shall possess their valuables of silver;
Thorns *shall be* in their tents.
7 The days of punishment have come;
The days of recompense have come.
Israel knows!
The prophet *is* a fool,
The spiritual man *is* insane,
Because of the greatness of your iniquity and great enmity.
8 The watchman of Ephraim *is* with my God;
But the prophet *is* a fowler's[a] snare in all his ways—
Enmity in the house of his God.
9 They are deeply corrupted,
As in the days of Gibeah.
He will remember their iniquity;
He will punish their sins.

10 "I found Israel
Like grapes in the wilderness;
I saw your fathers
As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season.
But they went to Baal Peor,
And separated themselves *to that* shame;
They became an abomination like the thing they loved.
11 *As for* Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird—
No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception!
12 Though they bring up their children,
Yet I will bereave them to the last man.
Yes, woe to them when I depart from them!
13 Just as I saw Ephraim like Tyre, planted in a pleasant place,
So Ephraim will bring out his children to the murderer."

14 Give them, O LORD—
What will You give?
Give them a miscarrying womb
And dry breasts!

15 "All their wickedness *is* in Gilgal,
For there I hated them.
Because of the evil of their deeds
I will drive them from My house;
I will love them no more.
All their princes *are* rebellious.
16 Ephraim is stricken,
Their root is dried up;
They shall bear no fruit.
Yes, were they to bear children,
I would kill the darlings of their womb."

17 My God will cast them away,
Because they did not obey Him;
And they shall be wanderers among the nations.

Israel's Sin and Captivity

10 Israel empties *his* vine;
He brings forth fruit for himself.
According to the multitude of his fruit
He has increased the altars;
According to the bounty of his land
They have embellished *his sacred* pillars.
2 Their heart is divided;

9:8 [a]That is, one who catches birds in a trap or snare **10:5** [a]Literally *calves*

Now they are held guilty.
He will break down their altars;
He will ruin their *sacred* pillars.

3 For now they say,
"We have no king,
Because we did not fear the LORD.
And as for a king, what would he do
for us?"
4 They have spoken words,
Swearing falsely in making a covenant.
Thus judgment springs up like hemlock
in the furrows of the field.

5 The inhabitants of Samaria fear
Because of the calf[a] of Beth Aven.
For its people mourn for it,
And its priests shriek for it—
Because its glory has departed from it.
6 *The idol* also shall be carried to Assyria
As a present for King Jareb.
Ephraim shall receive shame,



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love, and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them. | HOSEA 11:3, 4

When they had pasture, they were filled; they were filled and their heart was exalted; therefore they forgot Me. | HOSEA 13:6

These are heartbreaking verses. They show us how God feels. When we come to Him to start our life with Him, He teaches us to walk, carries us in His arms of protection, heals us when we don't recognize where the healing comes from, lifts the message from our mouths, and bends down to feed us. But as we eat, we become satisfied with ourselves, with life; and being satisfied we become proud. We begin to say, "I did it. With my own innate ability, I have overcome, I have succeeded." And then we forget Him.

This natural, earthly pull away from God happens with people, with institutions, with churches, with countries. The prince of this world, Satan, makes the pull away from God seem right to man.

It reminds me of my granddaughter at three and a half years. Since her birth, her mother had lovingly fed her with her hand, healed her hurts, taught her to talk, taught her to walk. But now that she could do all these things, she was proud, proud of herself and her accomplishments. So one day when she was mad at her mother, she said with fire in her eye, "You can't be my mommy anymore."

Pride was the culprit, just as pride is the culprit when we in effect say, "You can't be my Lord anymore." It doesn't change the facts. Paula is still Jamaica's mother just as God is still our Father. All that has been added is the hurt. No wonder the psalmist prayed, "See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:24).

And Israel shall be ashamed of his own
counsel.

7 *As for* Samaria, her king is cut off
Like a twig on the water.
8 Also the high places of Aven, the sin
of Israel,
Shall be destroyed.
The thorn and thistle shall grow on
their altars;
They shall say to the mountains,
"Cover us!"
And to the hills, "Fall on us!"

9 "O Israel, you have sinned from the
days of Gibeah;
There they stood.
The battle in Gibeah against the
children of iniquity[a]
Did not overtake them.
10 When *it is* My desire, I will chasten them.
Peoples shall be gathered against them
When I bind them for their two
transgressions.[a]
11 Ephraim *is* a trained heifer
That loves to thresh *grain;*
But I harnessed her fair neck,
I will make Ephraim pull *a plow.*
Judah shall plow;
Jacob shall break his clods."

12 Sow for yourselves righteousness;
Reap in mercy;
Break up your fallow ground,
For *it is* time to seek the LORD,
Till He comes and rains
righteousness on you.

13 You have plowed wickedness;
You have reaped iniquity.
You have eaten the fruit of lies,
Because you trusted in your own way,
In the multitude of your mighty men.
14 Therefore tumult shall arise among
your people,
And all your fortresses shall be
plundered
As Shalman plundered Beth Arbel in
the day of battle—
A mother dashed in pieces upon *her*
children.
15 Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel,
Because of your great wickedness.
At dawn the king of Israel
Shall be cut off utterly.

God's Continuing Love for Israel

11 "When Israel *was* a child, I loved him,
And out of Egypt I called My son.
2 *As* they called them,[a]
So they went from them;[b]
They sacrificed to the Baals,
And burned incense to carved images.

3 "I taught Ephraim to walk,
Taking them by their arms;[a]
But they did not know that I healed
them.
4 I drew them with gentle cords,[a]
With bands of love,
And I was to them as those who take
the yoke from their neck.[b]
I stooped *and* fed them.

5 "He shall not return to the land
of Egypt;
But the Assyrian shall be his king,
Because they refused to repent.
6 And the sword shall slash in his cities,
Devour his districts,
And consume *them,*
Because of their own counsels.
7 My people are bent on backsliding
from Me.
Though they call to the Most High,[a]
None at all exalt *Him.*

8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?
How can I set you like Zeboiim?
My heart churns within Me;
My sympathy is stirred.
9 I will not execute the fierceness of
My anger;
I will not again destroy Ephraim.
For I *am* God, and not man,
The Holy One in your midst;
And I will not come with terror.[a]

10 "They shall walk after the LORD.
He will roar like a lion.
When He roars,

10:9 [a]So read many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *unruliness.* **10:10** [a]Or *in their two habitations*
11:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Just as I called them;* Targum interprets as *I sent prophets to a thousand of them.* [b]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *from My face.* **11:3** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *My arms.* **11:4** [a]Literally *cords of a man* [b]Literally *jaws*
11:7 [a]Or *upward* **11:9** [a]Or *I will not enter a city*

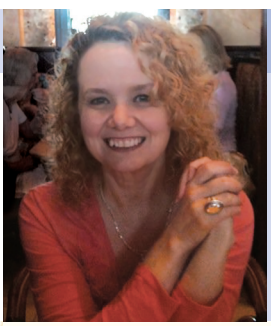
Then *His* sons shall come trembling
from the west;
11 They shall come trembling like a bird
from Egypt,
Like a dove from the land of Assyria.
And I will let them dwell in their houses,"
Says the LORD.

God's Charge Against Ephraim

12 "Ephraim has encircled Me with lies,
And the house of Israel with deceit;
But Judah still walks with God,
Even with the Holy One[a] *who is* faithful.
12 "Ephraim feeds on the wind,
And pursues the east wind;
He daily increases lies and desolation.
Also they make a covenant with the
Assyrians,
And oil is carried to Egypt.

2 "The LORD also *brings* a charge against
Judah,
And will punish Jacob according to
his ways;
According to his deeds He will
recompense him.
3 He took his brother by the heel in
the womb,
And in his strength he struggled
with God.[a]
4 Yes, he struggled with the Angel and
prevailed;
He wept, and sought favor from Him.
He found Him *in* Bethel,
And there He spoke to us—
5 That is, the LORD God of hosts.

11:12 [a]Or *holy ones* **12:3** [a]Compare Genesis 32:28



ROBERTA CROTEAU • Editor of *Homecoming Magazine,* Author

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him. | HOSEA 14:4

When God asked His prophet Hosea to marry the local loose woman, the groom must have thought Someone was off His rocker. Spend your lifetime convincing the world you are the messenger of God's words of morality, justice, and truth—and then He asks you to . . . what?! It's probably, at its core, one of the funniest stories in the Bible. Leave it to God to drive someone crazy to help make a point. Not to mention imagining this whole story from Gomer's point of view: One day you're the scourge of the town, and the next day you're walking down the aisle with the village preacher man.

Makes you wonder if anyone knew what was going on that day. But something amazing usually does happen when you let go and let God do whatever He wants.

So Gomer marries Hosea, and they have a few children with depressing names, and life sort of goes on for the odd couple. Until Gomer's old life beckons and that age-old temptation returns. Perhaps she couldn't really believe she could be loved. Or that she was worth being loved. Or maybe she believed she wasn't good enough to live like someone who was loved.

The LORD *is* His memorable name.
6 So you, by *the help of* your God, return;
Observe mercy and justice,
And wait on your God continually.

7 "A cunning Canaanite!
Deceitful scales *are* in his hand;
He loves to oppress.
8 And Ephraim said,
'Surely I have become rich,
I have found wealth for myself;
In all my labors
They shall find in me no iniquity
that *is* sin.'

9 "But I *am* the LORD your God,
Ever since the land of Egypt;
I will again make you dwell in tents,
As in the days of the appointed feast.

10 I have also spoken by the prophets,
And have multiplied visions;
I have given symbols through the
witness of the prophets."

11 Though Gilead *has* idols—
Surely they are vanity—
Though they sacrifice bulls in
Gilgal,
Indeed their altars *shall be* heaps
in the furrows of the field.

12 Jacob fled to the country of Syria;
Israel served for a spouse,
And for a wife he tended *sheep*.
13 By a prophet the LORD brought Israel
out of Egypt,
And by a prophet he was preserved.

Whatever her reasons, she strayed. And Hosea came home, but instead of kicking her back to the streets, he just said over and over again, "How can I ever leave you? How could I ever not love you?" Hosea's heart may have been crushed by her betrayal, but his love was indestructible. God, it seems, must have looked down and said, "See, do you get it yet? Anyone? This is what I've been saying all along."

You can almost imagine Him chuckle when He first dreams up the absurd plot. If You can prove to one of Your creations that the love they have for another person is a mere sliver of the love You have for them, maybe—just maybe—they'd start to understand. That boundless, fathomless ocean that is God's love seems limited only by our inability to accept it. It's just too wild for words.

Charlie Chaplin, the old-time actor and film director, was no stranger to absurdities himself when he declared, "Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot." Almost everything's funny when you're not in the middle of it. So the farther you walk away from something that breaks your heart, the closer you come to realizing that you are surrounded by a love so unreal, it would take a miracle to make you believe it.

Hosea got a close-up view—in fact, he got the leading role in God's attempt to show the world His love. No matter how far you go, the script reads, there is absolutely nothing you can do to shake Him. Many have tried, including Gomer—who put in one of history's strongest performances—but so far no one has succeeded.

14 Ephraim provoked *Him* to anger most bitterly;
Therefore his Lord will leave the guilt of his bloodshed upon him,
And return his reproach upon him.

Relentless Judgment on Israel

13 When Ephraim spoke, trembling,
He exalted *himself* in Israel;
But when he offended through Baal *worship*, he died.
2 Now they sin more and more,
And have made for themselves molded images,
Idols of their silver, according to their skill;
All of it *is* the work of craftsmen.
They say of them,
"Let the men who sacrifice[a] kiss the calves!"
3 Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud
And like the early dew that passes away,
Like chaff blown off from a threshing floor
And like smoke from a chimney.

4 "Yet I *am* the LORD your God
Ever since the land of Egypt,
And you shall know no God but Me;
For *there is* no savior besides Me.
5 I knew you in the wilderness,
In the land of great drought.
6 When they had pasture, they were filled;
They were filled and their heart was exalted;
Therefore they forgot Me.

7 "So I will be to them like a lion;
Like a leopard by the road I will lurk;
8 I will meet them like a bear deprived *of her cubs;*
I will tear open their rib cage,
And there I will devour them like a lion.
The wild beast shall tear them.

9 "O Israel, you are destroyed,[a]
But your help[b] *is* from Me.
10 I will be your King;[a]
Where *is any other,*
That he may save you in all your cities?
And your judges to whom you said,
'Give me a king and princes'?
11 I gave you a king in My anger,
And took *him* away in My wrath.

12 "The iniquity of Ephraim *is* bound up;
His sin *is* stored up.
13 The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon him.
He *is* an unwise son,
For he should not stay long where children are born.

14 "I will ransom them from the power of the grave;[a]
I will redeem them from death.
O Death, I will be your plagues![b]
O Grave,[c] I will be your destruction![d]
Pity is hidden from My eyes."

15 Though he is fruitful among *his* brethren,
An east wind shall come;
The wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness.
Then his spring shall become dry,
And his fountain shall be dried up.
He shall plunder the treasury of every desirable prize.
16 Samaria is held guilty,[a]
For she has rebelled against her God.
They shall fall by the sword,
Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
And their women with child ripped open.

Israel Restored at Last

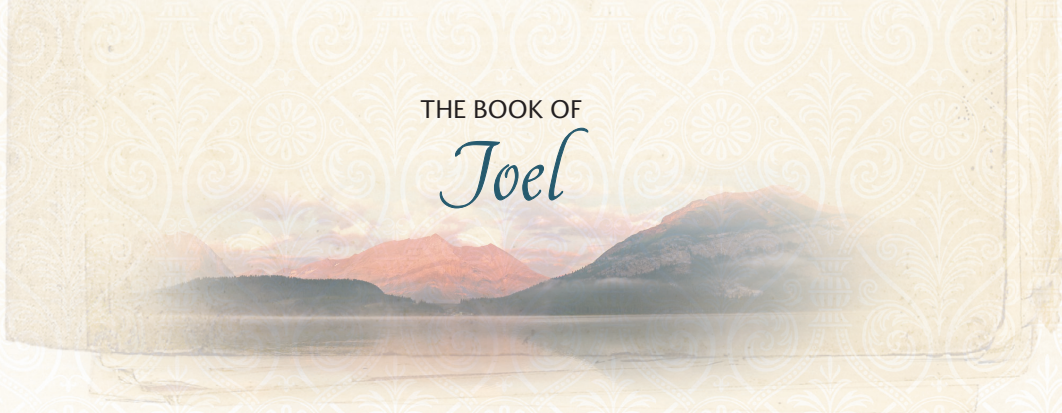
14 O Israel, return to the LORD your God,
For you have stumbled because of your iniquity;
2 Take words with you,
And return to the LORD.
Say to Him,
"Take away all iniquity;
Receive *us* graciously,
For we will offer the sacrifices[a] of our lips.
3 Assyria shall not save us,
We will not ride on horses,
Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, '*You are* our gods.'
For in You the fatherless finds mercy."

13:2 [a]Or *those who offer human sacrifice* **13:9** [a]Literally *it* or *he destroyed you* [b]Literally *in your help* **13:10** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *Where is your king?*
13:14 [a]Or *Sheol* [b]Septuagint reads *where is your punishment?* [c]Or *Sheol* [d]Septuagint reads *where is your sting?* **13:16** [a]Septuagint reads *shall be disfigured* **14:2** [a]Literally *bull calves;* Septuagint reads *fruit.*

4 "I will heal their backsliding,
I will love them freely,
For My anger has turned away
from him.
5 I will be like the dew to Israel;
He shall grow like the lily,
And lengthen his roots like Lebanon.
6 His branches shall spread;
His beauty shall be like an olive tree,
And his fragrance like Lebanon.
7 Those who dwell under his shadow
shall return;
They shall be revived *like* grain,
And grow like a vine.
Their scent[a] *shall be* like the wine
of Lebanon.
8 "Ephraim *shall say,* 'What have I to
do anymore with idols?'
I have heard and observed him.
I *am* like a green cypress tree;
Your fruit is found in Me."

9 Who *is* wise?
Let him understand these
things.
Who is prudent?
Let him know them.
For the ways of the LORD *are* right;
The righteous walk in them,
But transgressors stumble
in them.

14:7 [a]Literally *remembrance*



THE BOOK OF

Joel

1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel
the son of Pethuel.

The Land Laid Waste

2 Hear this, you elders,
And give ear, all you inhabitants of
the land!
Has *anything like* this happened in
your days,
Or even in the days of your fathers?
3 Tell your children about it,
Let your children *tell* their children,
And their children another generation.

4 What the chewing locust[a] left, the
swarming locust has eaten;
What the swarming locust left, the
crawling locust has eaten;
And what the crawling locust left, the
consuming locust has eaten.

5 Awake, you drunkards, and weep;
And wail, all you drinkers of wine,
Because of the new wine,
For it has been cut off from your mouth.
6 For a nation has come up against My
land,
Strong, and without number;
His teeth *are* the teeth of a lion,
And he has the fangs of a fierce lion.
7 He has laid waste My vine,
And ruined My fig tree;
He has stripped it bare and thrown
it away;
Its branches are made white.

8 Lament like a virgin girded with
sackcloth
For the husband of her youth.
9 The grain offering and the drink offering
Have been cut off from the house of
the LORD;
The priests mourn, who minister to
the LORD.

10 The field is wasted,
The land mourns;
For the grain is ruined,
The new wine is dried up,
The oil fails.

11 Be ashamed, you farmers,
Wail, you vinedressers,
For the wheat and the barley;
Because the harvest of the field has
perished.
12 The vine has dried up,
And the fig tree has withered;
The pomegranate tree,
The palm tree also,
And the apple tree—
All the trees of the field are withered;
Surely joy has withered away from the
sons of men.

Mourning for the Land

13 Gird yourselves and lament, you
priests;
Wail, you who minister before
the altar;
Come, lie all night in sackcloth,
You who minister to my God;
For the grain offering and the drink
offering
Are withheld from the house of your
God.
14 Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly;
Gather the elders
And all the inhabitants of the land
Into the house of the LORD your God,
And cry out to the LORD.

15 Alas for the day!
For the day of the LORD *is* at hand;
It shall come as destruction from the
Almighty.
16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes,

1:4 [a]Exact identity of these locusts is unknown.

Joy and gladness from the house of
our God?
17 The seed shrivels under the clods,
Storehouses are in shambles;
Barns are broken down,
For the grain has withered.
18 How the animals groan!
The herds of cattle are restless,
Because they have no pasture;
Even the flocks of sheep suffer
punishment.[a]

19 O LORD, to You I cry out;
For fire has devoured the open
pastures,
And a flame has burned all the trees
of the field.
20 The beasts of the field also cry out
to You,
For the water brooks are dried up,
And fire has devoured the open pastures.

The Day of the LORD

2 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
And sound an alarm in My holy
mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land
tremble;
For the day of the LORD is coming,
For it is at hand:
2 A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning *clouds* spread over
the mountains.
A people *come,* great and strong,
The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any *such* after
them,
Even for many successive generations.

3 A fire devours before them,
And behind them a flame burns;
The land *is* like the Garden of Eden
before them,
And behind them a desolate
wilderness;
Surely nothing shall escape them.
4 Their appearance is like the
appearance of horses;
And like swift steeds, so they run.
5 With a noise like chariots
Over mountaintops they leap,
Like the noise of a flaming fire that
devours the stubble,
Like a strong people set in battle array.
6 Before them the people writhe in pain;
All faces are drained of color.[a]
7 They run like mighty men,
They climb the wall like men of war;
Every one marches in formation,
And they do not break ranks.
8 They do not push one another;
Every one marches in his own column.[a]
Though they lunge between the
weapons,
They are not cut down.[b]

Attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

JOHN WESLEY

9 They run to and fro in the city,
They run on the wall;
They climb into the houses,
They enter at the windows like a thief.

10 The earth quakes before them,
The heavens tremble;
The sun and moon grow dark,
And the stars diminish their
brightness.
11 The LORD gives voice before His army,
For His camp is very great;
For strong *is the One* who executes
His word.
For the day of the LORD *is* great and
very terrible;
Who can endure it?

A Call to Repentance

12 "Now, therefore," says the LORD,
"Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with
mourning."
13 So rend your heart, and not your
garments;
Return to the LORD your God,

1:18 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *are made desolate.* **2:6** [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *gather blackness.* **2:8** [a]Literally *his own highway* [b]That is, they are not halted by losses

It's Beginning to Rain

The turtledove is singing its sweet song of mourning;
The leaves on the trees turn their silver cups to the sky.
The silent clouds above are beginning to gather;
The barren land is thirsty, and so am I.

The young man's eyes start to shine as he tells of his vision;
The old understand what he sees for they've dreamed their dreams.
With the thrill of being alive, they reach for each other,
And they dance in the rain with the joy of the things that they've seen.

At the first drop of rain that you hear, throw open the windows;
Go call all your children together and throw wide the door!
When the rains of the Spirit are falling, fill every vessel,
For he who drinks his fill will thirst no more.

It's beginning to rain—
Hear the voice of the Father,
Saying, "Whosoever will
Come drink of this water;
I have promised to pour My Spirit out
On your sons and your daughters.
If you're thirsty and dry,
Look up to the sky—
It's beginning to rain."

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

JOEL 2:28, 29

I've always loved water. Nothing quiets my spirit and makes me feel as if I'm where I belong so much as a body of water. I love the flowing river that meanders through meadows and fields, forests and cities; I love its quiet power, cutting through granite, gouging out canyons, slicing through mountains, moving whole civilizations. I love lakes, still and mysterious, calming and secretive, mirroring everything along their shores, calling the children to skip rocks and the fishermen to skip work.

But most of all I love the sea. I love the beauty and the terror of it. I love the certainty and the uncertainty of it, its amazing power and its sweet gentleness. It reminds me never to limit myself to believing merely in the possible, and most of all, never to limit God to what seems possible. It reminds me that a God who can be explained by my mind is no God at all, but an idol constructed by my own hands or worse, a house pet led on a leash. I must stand beside the ocean often so I will not forget that I am not the Creator of the universe and that I must never create God in my image. His ways are immensely higher than my ways.

When I worry about relationships that seem to come and go, I must let the tide teach me that there is an ebb and flow to everything, and that the tide that goes out will, in due time, return if I just trust the God who sets the boundaries and is the measure of all things.

I've heard the story of a man standing by the ocean and exclaiming, "Just look at all that water." His wisecracking friend replied, "Yes, and just think . . . that's only the top of it!" Exactly! If the surface is an awesome

thing, just consider the amazing, expansive depths. Scientists say we know more about outer space and the galaxies than we know about the wonders of the deep sea. One thing we know: water is life. Without the sea there would be no life. From those bodies of water moisture is drawn into clouds that drop rain onto the thirsty land. No plant life or animal life could survive without water. Water is everything to the survival of this earth.

I also love the rain. I love rainy days; that's when I feel most creative. I love fog and mist and downpours and sprinkles. I love storms with thunder and lightning and periwinkle purple skies. I love moisture frozen high in the atmosphere that sifts down on my face as snow.

I love water. I always thought we had it all wrong. If water is the most life-giving element on earth, then when rain comes we should all run out into it instead of running inside to get out of it. Instead of closing the windows and doors, we should fling them open to watch and hear and feel the life-sustaining gift being bestowed upon us all. We should gather our children and be bathed by the rain on our faces—and give thanks for the wonder of wonders.

Jesus told us He is the source of living water (John 7:38). All too often when the rains of His Spirit begin to fall, we reach for our umbrellas. When the lightning flashes around our churches and the voice of God thunders, we close the doors and stained-glass windows and worship the Good Shepherd who is safely depicted behind the baptistery.

But the Water of Life says, "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy [preach!], your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28). When we begin to hear the thunder of old men becoming insightful, of young men becoming visionary, of young men or women delivering inspired messages, we should throw open the windows and fling wide the doors. We should gather our children and run into the streets, praying that the rains of the Water of Life will drench us all. We should splash and play in the puddles of fresh insights, swim in the lakes of renewal, and dive into the rivers of mercy. We should push out into the sea of God's amazing life-giving love.

Can you feel the winds start to blow? Can you see the change in the sky and the trees? It's beginning to rain. The Water of Life is coming!



For He *is* gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, and of great kindness;
And He relents from doing harm.
14 Who knows *if* He will turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind Him—
A grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God?

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly;
16 Gather the people,
Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and nursing babes;
Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,
And the bride from her dressing room.
17 Let the priests, who minister to the LORD,
Weep between the porch and the altar;
Let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD,
And do not give Your heritage to reproach,
That the nations should rule over them.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where *is* their God?'"

The Land Refreshed

18 Then the LORD will be zealous for His land,
And pity His people.
19 The LORD will answer and say to His people,
"Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil,
And you will be satisfied by them;
I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.

20 "But I will remove far from you the northern *army,*
And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land,
With his face toward the eastern sea
And his back toward the western sea;
His stench will come up,
And his foul odor will rise,
Because he has done monstrous things."

21 Fear not, O land;
Be glad and rejoice,
For the LORD has done marvelous things!
22 Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field;
For the open pastures are springing up,
And the tree bears its fruit;
The fig tree and the vine yield their strength.
23 Be glad then, you children of Zion,
And rejoice in the LORD your God;
For He has given you the former rain faithfully,[a]
And He will cause the rain to come down for you—
The former rain,
And the latter rain in the first *month.*
24 The threshing floors shall be full of wheat,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.

25 "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten,
The crawling locust,
The consuming locust,
And the chewing locust,[a]
My great army which I sent among you.
26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
And praise the name of the LORD your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you;
And My people shall never be put to shame.

2:23 [a]Or *the teacher of righteousness* **2:25** [a]Compare 1:4



27 Then you shall know that I *am* in the
midst of Israel:
I *am* the LORD your God
And there is no other.
My people shall never be put to shame.

God's Spirit Poured Out

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on
all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall
prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
29 And also on *My* menservants and on
My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

30 "And I will show wonders in the heavens
and in the earth:
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
31 The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and
awesome day of the LORD.
32 And it shall come to pass
That whoever calls on the name of
the LORD
Shall be saved.
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
there shall be deliverance,
As the LORD has said,
Among the remnant whom the
LORD calls.

God Judges the Nations

3 "For behold, in those days and at
that time,
When I bring back the captives of
Judah and Jerusalem,
2 I will also gather all nations,
And bring them down to the Valley of
Jehoshaphat;
And I will enter into judgment with
them there
On account of My people, My heritage
Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the
nations;
They have also divided up My land.
3 They have cast lots for My people,



KIM HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. | JOEL 2:28

My brother passed away when he was only forty-one. After years of his fighting kidney disease, dealing with dialysis, and finally a kidney transplant, pneumonia took my sweet baby brother. In reality, from the age of sixteen, he had technically lived only one normal, healthy year of life (the year following his transplant). A seemingly routine hospital visit turned out to be his last; he succumbed to pneumonia, lost his donor kidney, and passed away a few short days later.

Admittedly, I was furious, and not just with God, but with myself, doctors, machinery, family, and my now-dead brother. How could God "will" that this young man, with a fresh shot at a healthy, mobile life, was ready

Have given a boy *as payment* for a harlot,
And sold a girl for wine, that they
may drink.

4 "Indeed, what have you to do with Me,
O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of
Philistia?
Will you retaliate against Me?
But if you retaliate against Me,
Swiftly and speedily I will return your
retaliation upon your own head;
5 Because you have taken My silver and
My gold,
And have carried into your temples
My prized possessions.
6 Also the people of Judah and the
people of Jerusalem
You have sold to the Greeks,
That you may remove them far from
their borders.

7 "Behold, I will raise them
Out of the place to which you have
sold them,
And will return your retaliation upon
your own head.
8 I will sell your sons and your
daughters
Into the hand of the people of Judah,
And they will sell them to the Sabeans,[a]
To a people far off;
For the LORD has spoken."

9 Proclaim this among the nations:
"Prepare for war!
Wake up the mighty men,
Let all the men of war draw near,
Let them come up.
10 Beat your plowshares into swords
And your pruning hooks into spears;
Let the weak say, 'I *am* strong.'"
11 Assemble and come, all you nations,
And gather together all around.
Cause Your mighty ones to go down
there, O LORD.

12 "Let the nations be wakened, and come
up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
For there I will sit to judge all the
surrounding nations.

3:8 [a]Literally *Shebaites* (compare Isaiah 60:6 and Ezekiel 27:22)

to be taken? How could this be fair to leave behind two small children, ages two and six? My angry reaction was based on my emotions and what to my mind seemed logical, ignoring the eternal.

One night while lying in my own bed, I heard the phone ring. I shot up to answer; it was my brother on the line. In his loud overbearing tone that I had missed so much, he told me, "Stop worrying, Sis!" He said he was "fine, happy, and finally at peace." I cannot explain this experience. Some would say it was my subconscious giving me exactly what I longed for. But I believe it was God's way of comforting those who mourn.

Matthew 5:4 says, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Could it be that some are comforted through love and closure, and some, like me, through dreams? "Old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions," Joel 2:28 says. I woke the next morning with a slightly lighter heart. Whether it was a dream or a vision, God allowed me the experience. Although I had questioned Him, He in His own way comforted and reminded me of His infinite love, eternal life, and a home with Him and those we have loved and lost. I am thankful for this experience that opened my eyes to some wonderful promises I had missed.

13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.
Come, go down;
For the winepress is full,
The vats overflow—
For their wickedness *is* great."

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley
of decision!
For the day of the LORD *is* near in the
valley of decision.
15 The sun and moon will grow dark,
And the stars will diminish their
brightness.
16 The LORD also will roar from Zion,
And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and earth will shake;
But the LORD will be a shelter for His
people,
And the strength of the children of Israel.

17 "So you shall know that I *am* the LORD
your God,
Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain.
Then Jerusalem shall be holy,
And no aliens shall ever pass through
her again."

God Blesses His People

18 And it will come to pass in
that day
That the mountains shall drip
with new wine,
The hills shall flow with milk,
And all the brooks of Judah shall
be flooded with water;
A fountain shall flow from the house
of the LORD
And water the Valley of Acacias.

19 "Egypt shall be a desolation,
And Edom a desolate wilderness,
Because of violence *against* the
people of Judah,
For they have shed innocent blood
in their land.
20 But Judah shall abide forever,
And Jerusalem from generation to
generation.
21 For I will acquit them of the guilt
of bloodshed, whom I had not
acquitted;
For the LORD dwells in Zion."



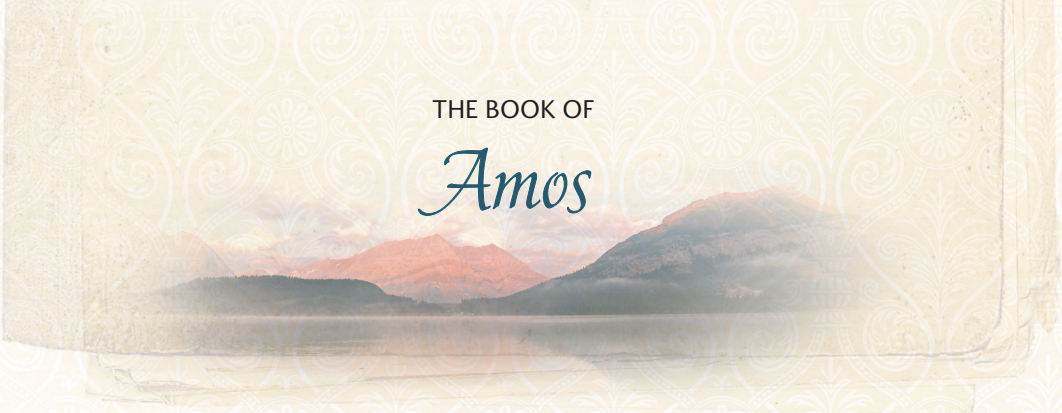
CALVIN NEWTON • Homecoming Artist, Formerly with *The Blackwood Brothers Quartet*

So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame. | JOEL 2:25, 26

In my younger years it seemed that I was so often just on the edge of accomplishing my highest goals, and then something would smash my plans flat. I realize that most of the problems that came my way were the result of my bad decisions (but the locusts and cankerworms were sent to the children of Israel because of their sins, also). This verse assures me that if we turn to God and away from evil, He is always faithful, and He can and will restore to us the blessings that were taken away years ago. I've found this so true in my own life. My latter years have proven to be much sweeter and more productive than my younger years!

THE BOOK OF

Amos



1 The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders[a] of Tekoa, which he saw
concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah
king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam
the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years
before the earthquake.
2 And he said:

"The LORD roars from Zion,
And utters His voice from Jerusalem;
The pastures of the shepherds mourn,
And the top of Carmel withers."

Judgment on the Nations

3 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Damascus,
and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they have threshed Gilead
with implements of iron.
4 But I will send a fire into the house
of Hazael,
Which shall devour the palaces of
Ben-Hadad.
5 I will also break the *gate* bar of Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the
Valley of Aven,
And the one who holds the scepter
from Beth Eden.
The people of Syria shall go captive
to Kir,"
Says the LORD.

6 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Gaza, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they took captive the whole
captivity
To deliver *them* up to Edom.
7 But I will send a fire upon the wall
of Gaza,
Which shall devour its palaces.
8 I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,
And the one who holds the scepter
from Ashkelon;
I will turn My hand against Ekron,
And the remnant of the Philistines
shall perish,"
Says the Lord GOD.

9 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Tyre, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they delivered up the whole
captivity to Edom,
And did not remember the covenant
of brotherhood.
10 But I will send a fire upon the wall of
Tyre,
Which shall devour its palaces."

11 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Edom,
and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because he pursued his brother with
the sword,
And cast off all pity;
His anger tore perpetually,
And he kept his wrath forever.
12 But I will send a fire upon Teman,
Which shall devour the palaces of
Bozrah."

13 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of the people
of Ammon, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they ripped open the women
with child in Gilead,

1:1 [a]Compare 2 Kings 3:4

That they might enlarge their territory.
14 But I will kindle a fire in the wall of
Rabbah,
And it shall devour its palaces,
Amid shouting in the day of battle,
And a tempest in the day of the
whirlwind.
15 Their king shall go into captivity,
He and his princes together,"
Says the LORD.

2 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Moab, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because he burned the bones of the
king of Edom to lime.
2 But I will send a fire upon Moab,
And it shall devour the palaces of
Kerioth;
Moab shall die with tumult,
With shouting *and* trumpet sound.
3 And I will cut off the judge from its
midst,
And slay all its princes with him,"
Says the LORD.

Judgment on Judah

4 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Judah, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they have despised the law of
the LORD,
And have not kept His commandments.
Their lies lead them astray,
Lies which their fathers followed.
5 But I will send a fire upon Judah,
And it shall devour the palaces of
Jerusalem."

Judgment on Israel

6 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Israel, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they sell the righteous for silver,
And the poor for a pair of sandals.
7 They pant after[a] the dust of the earth
which is on the head of the poor,
And pervert the way of the humble.
A man and his father go in to the
same girl,
To defile My holy name.
8 They lie down by every altar on clothes
taken in pledge,
And drink the wine of the condemned
in the house of their god.

9 "Yet *it was* I *who* destroyed the Amorite
before them,
Whose height *was* like the height of
the cedars,
And he *was as* strong as the oaks;
Yet I destroyed his fruit above
And his roots beneath.
10 Also *it was* I *who* brought you up from
the land of Egypt,
And led you forty years through the
wilderness,
To possess the land of the Amorite.
11 I raised up some of your sons as
prophets,
And some of your young men as
Nazirites.
Is it not so, O you children of Israel?"
Says the LORD.
12 "But you gave the Nazirites wine to
drink,
And commanded the prophets saying,
'Do not prophesy!'

13 "Behold, I am weighed down by you,
As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.
14 Therefore flight shall perish from the
swift,
The strong shall not strengthen his
power,
Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;
15 He shall not stand who handles the bow,
The swift of foot shall not escape,
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver
himself.
16 The most courageous men of might
Shall flee naked in that day,"
Says the LORD.

Authority of the Prophet's Message

3 Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel,
against the whole family which I brought
up from the land of Egypt, saying:

2:7 [a]Or *trample on*

2 "You only have I known of all the families of the earth;
Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?
4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?
Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?
5 Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no trap for it?
Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all?
6 If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid?
If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done *it?*

7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing,
Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.
8 A lion has roared!
Who will not fear?
The Lord GOD has spoken!
Who can but prophesy?

Punishment of Israel's Sins

9 "Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod,[a]
And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say:
'Assemble on the mountains of Samaria;
See great tumults in her midst,
And the oppressed within her.
10 For they do not know to do right,'
Says the LORD,
'Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.'"

11 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"An adversary *shall be* all around the land;
He shall sap your strength from you,
And your palaces shall be plundered."

12 Thus says the LORD:

"As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion
Two legs or a piece of an ear,
So shall the children of Israel be taken out
Who dwell in Samaria—
In the corner of a bed and on the edge[a] of a couch!
13 Hear and testify against the house of Jacob,"
Says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,
14 "That in the day I punish Israel for their transgressions,
I will also visit *destruction* on the altars of Bethel;
And the horns of the altar shall be cut off
And fall to the ground.
15 I will destroy the winter house along with the summer house;
The houses of ivory shall perish,
And the great houses shall have an end,"
Says the LORD.

4 Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who *are* on the mountain of Samaria,
Who oppress the poor,
Who crush the needy,
Who say to your husbands,[a] "Bring *wine,* let us drink!"
2 The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness:
"Behold, the days shall come upon you
When He will take you away with fishhooks,
And your posterity with fishhooks.
3 You will go out *through* broken *walls,*
Each one straight ahead of her,
And you will be cast into Harmon,"
Says the LORD.

4 "Come to Bethel and transgress,
At Gilgal multiply transgression;
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
Your tithes every three days.[a]
5 Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven,
Proclaim *and* announce the freewill offerings;
For this you love,
You children of Israel!"
Says the Lord GOD.

Israel Did Not Accept Correction

6 "Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities,
And lack of bread in all your places;

3:9 [a]Following Masoretic Text; Septuagint reads *Assyria.*
3:12 [a]The Hebrew is uncertain. **4:1** [a]Literally *their lords* or *their masters*
4:4 [a]Or *years* (compare Deuteronomy 14:28)

Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

7 "I also withheld rain from you,
When *there were* still three months to the harvest.
I made it rain on one city,
I withheld rain from another city.
One part was rained upon,
And where it did not rain the part withered.
8 So two *or* three cities wandered to another city to drink water,
But they were not satisfied;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

9 "I blasted you with blight and mildew.
When your gardens increased,
Your vineyards,
Your fig trees,
And your olive trees,
The locust devoured *them;*
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

10 "I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt;
Your young men I killed with a sword,
Along with your captive horses;
I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

11 "I overthrew *some* of you,
As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

12 "Therefore thus will I do to you,
O Israel;
Because I will do this to you,
Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"

13 For behold,
He who forms mountains,
And creates the wind,
Who declares to man what his[a] thought *is,*
And makes the morning darkness,
Who treads the high places of the earth—
The LORD God of hosts *is* His name.

A Lament for Israel

5 Hear this word which I take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel:

2 The virgin of Israel has fallen;
She will rise no more.
She lies forsaken on her land;
There is no one to raise her up.

3 For thus says the Lord GOD:

"The city that goes out by a thousand
Shall have a hundred left,
And that which goes out by a hundred
Shall have ten left to the house of Israel."

A Call to Repentance

4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel:

"Seek Me and live;
5 But do not seek Bethel,
Nor enter Gilgal,
Nor pass over to Beersheba;
For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity,
And Bethel shall come to nothing.
6 Seek the LORD and live,
Lest He break out like fire *in* the house of Joseph,
And devour *it,*
With no one to quench *it* in Bethel—
7 You who turn justice to wormwood,
And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!"

8 He made the Pleiades and Orion;
He turns the shadow of death into morning
And makes the day dark as night;
He calls for the waters of the sea
And pours them out on the face of the earth;
The LORD *is* His name.
9 He rains ruin upon the strong,
So that fury comes upon the fortress.

10 They hate the one who rebukes in the gate,

4:13 [a]Or *His*

And they abhor the one who speaks
uprightly.
11 Therefore, because you tread down the
poor
And take grain taxes from him,
Though you have built houses of hewn
stone,
Yet you shall not dwell in them;
You have planted pleasant vineyards,
But you shall not drink wine from them.
12 For I know your manifold transgressions
And your mighty sins:
Afflicting the just *and* taking bribes;
Diverting the poor *from justice* at the
gate.
13 Therefore the prudent keep silent at
that time,
For it *is* an evil time.

14 Seek good and not evil,
That you may live;
So the LORD God of hosts will be
with you,
As you have spoken.
15 Hate evil, love good;
Establish justice in the gate.
It may be that the LORD God of hosts
Will be gracious to the remnant of
Joseph.

The Day of the LORD

16 Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the
Lord, says this:

"*There shall be* wailing in all streets,
And they shall say in all the highways,
'Alas! Alas!'
They shall call the farmer to mourning,
And skillful lamenters to wailing.
17 In all vineyards *there shall be* wailing,
For I will pass through you,"
Says the LORD.

18 Woe to you who desire the day of
the LORD!
For what good *is* the day of the LORD
to you?
It *will be* darkness, and not light.
19 It *will be* as though a man fled from a lion,
And a bear met him!
Or *as though* he went into the house,
Leaned his hand on the wall,
And a serpent bit him!

20 *Is* not the day of the LORD darkness,
and not light?
Is it not very dark, with no brightness
in it?

21 "I hate, I despise your feast days,
And I do not savor your sacred
assemblies.
22 Though you offer Me burnt offerings
and your grain offerings,
I will not accept *them,*
Nor will I regard your fattened peace
offerings.
23 Take away from Me the noise of your
songs,
For I will not hear the melody of your
stringed instruments.
24 But let justice run down like water,
And righteousness like a mighty stream.

25 "Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings
In the wilderness forty years, O house
of Israel?
26 You also carried Sikkuth[a] your king[b]
And Chiun,[c] your idols,
The star of your gods,
Which you made for yourselves.
27 Therefore I will send you into captivity
beyond Damascus,"
Says the LORD, whose name *is* the God
of hosts.

Warnings to Zion and Samaria

6 Woe to you *who are* at ease in Zion,
And trust in Mount Samaria,
Notable persons in the chief nation,
To whom the house of Israel comes!
2 Go over to Calneh and see;
And from there go to Hamath the great;
Then go down to Gath of the Philistines.
Are you better than these kingdoms?
Or is their territory greater than your
territory?

3 *Woe to* you who put far off the day
of doom,
Who cause the seat of violence to
come near;
4 Who lie on beds of ivory,
Stretch out on your couches,
Eat lambs from the flock

5:26 [a]A pagan deity [b]Septuagint and Vulgate read *tabernacle of Moloch.*
[c]A pagan deity

Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the LORD *said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said: "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore."*
AMOS 7:7, 8

My daddy was a carpenter. I grew up making villages for my miniature people and animals out of piles of sawdust and pinning curls of wood shavings into my hair when I was pretending to be a princess. I became familiar with Daddy's tools, and he showed me how to use them: the plane, the saws, the sanders, and, of course, hammers, nails, and screwdrivers. To this day I love beautiful woods with interesting grains and can't help running my hands over their smooth polished surfaces.

One of my father's tools often made its way into his sermons. It was his plumb line, a piece of heavy metal shaped like a tiny child's top and tied to a piece of twine. He used it as the acid test on vertical supports like wall framing, beams, pillars, and the finished edges of walls of wood and masonry. The plumb line was pulled by gravity, so even unlevel ground that could fool the naked eye couldn't fool the plumb line. If the plumb line said the board was straight, it was straight. Crossbeams could then be lined up on the horizontal and their accuracy could be measured with the level, a wooden board with a hole in the center across which two tiny tubes of oil had been fixed, each with a bubble inside. The plumb line and the level measured the quality of a carpenter's work and predicted whether or not, years later, the

And calves from the midst of the stall;
5 Who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments,
And invent for yourselves musical instruments like David;
6 Who drink wine from bowls,
And anoint yourselves with the best ointments,
But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.
7 Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives,
And those who recline at banquets shall be removed.

8 The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself,
The LORD God of hosts says:
"I abhor the pride of Jacob,
And hate his palaces;
Therefore I will deliver up *the* city
And all that is in it."

9 Then it shall come to pass, that if ten men remain in one house, they shall die.
10 And when a relative *of the dead,* with one who will burn *the bodies,* picks up the bodies[a] to take them out of the house, he will say to one inside the house, "*Are there* any more with you?"
Then someone will say, "None."
And he will say, "Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the LORD."

11 For behold, the LORD gives a command:
He will break the great house into bits,
And the little house into pieces.

12 Do horses run on rocks?
Does *one* plow *there* with oxen?
Yet you have turned justice into gall,
And the fruit of righteousness into wormwood,
13 You who rejoice over Lo Debar,[a]
Who say, "Have we not taken Karnaim[b] for ourselves
By our own strength?"

14 "But, behold, I will raise up a nation against you,
O house of Israel,"
Says the LORD God of hosts;

6:10 [a]Literally *bones* **6:13** [a]Literally *Nothing* [b]Literally *Horns,* symbol of strength

"And they will afflict you from the
entrance of Hamath
To the Valley of the Arabah."

Vision of the Locusts

7 Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold,
He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop; indeed *it was* the late
crop after the king's mowings. 2 And so it
was, when they had finished eating the
grass of the land, that I said:

"O Lord God, forgive, I pray!
Oh, that Jacob may stand,
For he *is* small!"
3 *So* the Lord relented concerning this.
"It shall not be," said the Lord.

Vision of the Fire

4 Thus the Lord God showed me: Behold,
the Lord God called for conflict by fire, and
it consumed the great deep and devoured
the territory. 5 Then I said:

"O Lord God, cease, I pray!
Oh, that Jacob may stand,
For he *is* small!"
6 *So* the Lord relented concerning this.
"This also shall not be," said the
Lord God.

Vision of the Plumb Line

7 Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord
stood on a wall *made* with a plumb line,
with a plumb line in His hand. 8 And the
Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"
And I said, "A plumb line."
Then the Lord said:

"Behold, I am setting a plumb line
In the midst of My people Israel;
I will not pass by them anymore.
9 The high places of Isaac shall be
desolate,
And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be
laid waste.
I will rise with the sword against the
house of Jeroboam."

Amaziah's Complaint

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent
to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos
has conspired against you in the midst of

plaster applied to that wall would crack or the floor joists laid would creak. The plumb line and the level could even prophesy whether a hundred years from now a building would still stand straight and strong.

God's Word is the line that tells it straight. There are, in any age at any time, winds of public opinion, changing trends, and popular viewpoints. There are styles of dress, transportation, décor and behavior. There are fads and stars and influencers and idols. But there is only one perfect model and one accurate measuring stick that is trustworthy. It is the plumb line of God's word and the walking, living Word—Christ Himself, the great leveler. Against this living Word everything else must be measured if it is to stand the winds of change and the storms of time.

The prophet Amos lived at a time not unlike our own. It was a time of control freaks, self-sufficiency and affluence, yet a time when the poor were too often oppressed and injustice was an accepted practice. Religious performance was common but spiritual integrity and real obedience to God was uncommon. Here in his own words Amos said, "The Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the Lord said to me, 'Amos, what do you see?' And I said, 'A plumb line.' Then the Lord said: 'Behold, I am setting a plumb line'" (Amos 7:7, 8).

Jesus was a carpenter. He would have been very familiar with this measuring device. He came to be the living, walking plumb line . . . that our lives would stand straight and strong, enduring and withstanding all the pressures of the times.

the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. 11For thus Amos has said:

'Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
And Israel shall surely be led away
captive
From their own land.'"

12Then Amaziah said to Amos:

"Go, you seer!
Flee to the land of Judah.
There eat bread,
And there prophesy.
13 But never again prophesy at Bethel,
For it *is* the king's sanctuary,
And it *is* the royal residence."

Words are poor interpreters in the realms of emotion. When all words end, music begins; when they suggest, it realizes; and hence is the secret of its strange, inexpressible power.

H. R. HAWEIS

14Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah:

"I *was* no prophet,
Nor *was* I a son of a prophet,
But I *was* a sheepbreeder[a]
And a tender of sycamore fruit.
15 Then the LORD took me as I followed
the flock,
And the LORD said to me,
'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'
16 Now therefore, hear the word of the
LORD:
You say, 'Do not prophesy against
Israel,
And do not spout against the house
of Isaac.'

17"Therefore thus says the LORD:

'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city;
Your sons and daughters shall fall by
the sword;
Your land shall be divided by *survey*
line;
You shall die in a defiled land;
And Israel shall surely be led away
captive
From his own land.'"

Vision of the Summer Fruit

8 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, a basket of summer fruit. 2And He said, "Amos, what do you see?"
So I said, "A basket of summer fruit."
Then the LORD said to me:

"The end has come upon My people
Israel;
I will not pass by them anymore.
3 And the songs of the temple
Shall be wailing in that day,"
Says the Lord GOD—
"Many dead bodies everywhere,
They shall be thrown out in silence."

4 Hear this, you who swallow up[a] the
needy,
And make the poor of the land fail,

5Saying:

"When will the New Moon be past,
That we may sell grain?
And the Sabbath,
That we may trade wheat?
Making the ephah small and the shekel
large,
Falsifying the scales by deceit,
6 That we may buy the poor for silver,
And the needy for a pair of sandals—
Even sell the bad wheat?"

7 The LORD has sworn by the pride of
Jacob:
"Surely I will never forget any of their
works.
8 Shall the land not tremble for this,
And everyone mourn who dwells in it?
All of it shall swell like the River,[a]
Heave and subside
Like the River of Egypt.

9 "And it shall come to pass in that day,"
says the Lord GOD,
"That I will make the sun go down
at noon,

7:14 [a]Compare 2 Kings 3:4 **8:4** [a]Or *trample on* (compare 2:7)
8:8 [a]That is, the Nile; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *River;* Masoretic Text reads *the light*.

And I will darken the earth in broad
daylight;
10 I will turn your feasts into mourning,
And all your songs into lamentation;
I will bring sackcloth on every waist,
And baldness on every head;
I will make it like mourning for an
only *son,*
And its end like a bitter day.

11 "Behold, the days are coming," says the
Lord GOD,
"That I will send a famine on the land,
Not a famine of bread,
Nor a thirst for water,
But of hearing the words of the LORD.
12 They shall wander from sea to sea,
And from north to east;
They shall run to and fro, seeking the
word of the LORD,
But shall not find *it.*

13 "In that day the fair virgins
And strong young men
Shall faint from thirst.
14 Those who swear by the sin[a] of Samaria,
Who say,
'As your god lives, O Dan!'
And, 'As the way of Beersheba lives!'
They shall fall and never rise again."

The Destruction of Israel

9 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and
He said:

"Strike the doorposts, that the
thresholds may shake,
And break them on the heads of
them all.
I will slay the last of them with the
sword.
He who flees from them shall not get
away,
And he who escapes from them shall
not be delivered.

2 "Though they dig into hell,[a]
From there My hand shall take them;
Though they climb up to heaven,
From there I will bring them down;
3 And though they hide themselves on
top of Carmel,
From there I will search and take them;
Though they hide from My sight at the
bottom of the sea,
From there I will command the
serpent, and it shall bite them;
4 Though they go into captivity before
their enemies,
From there I will command the
sword,
And it shall slay them.
I will set My eyes on them for harm
and not for good."

5 The Lord GOD of hosts,
He who touches the earth and it
melts,
And all who dwell there mourn;
All of it shall swell like the River,[a]
And subside like the River of Egypt.
6 He who builds His layers in the sky,
And has founded His strata in the
earth;
Who calls for the waters of the sea,
And pours them out on the face of
the earth—
The LORD *is* His name.

7 "*Are* you not like the people of Ethiopia
to Me,
O children of Israel?" says the LORD.
"Did I not bring up Israel from the land
of Egypt,
The Philistines from Caphtor,
And the Syrians from Kir?

8 "Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD *are*
on the sinful kingdom,
And I will destroy it from the face of
the earth;
Yet I will not utterly destroy the house
of Jacob,"
Says the LORD.

9 "For surely I will command,
And will sift the house of Israel among
all nations,
As *grain* is sifted in a sieve;
Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to
the ground.
10 All the sinners of My people shall die
by the sword,
Who say, 'The calamity shall not
overtake nor confront us.'

8:14 [a]Or *Ashima,* a Syrian goddess **9:2** [a]Or *Sheol* **9:5** [a]That is, the Nile

Israel Will Be Restored

11 "On that day I will raise up
The tabernacle[a] of David, which has
fallen down,
And repair its damages;
I will raise up its ruins,
And rebuild it as in the days of old;
12 That they may possess the remnant
of Edom,[a]
And all the Gentiles who are called
by My name,"
Says the LORD who does this thing.

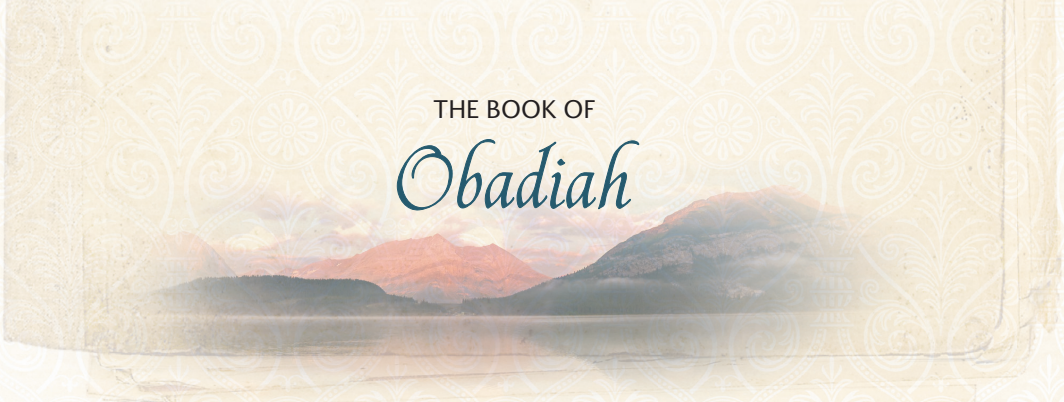
13 "Behold, the days are coming," says
the LORD,
"When the plowman shall overtake
the reaper,
And the treader of grapes him who
sows seed;
The mountains shall drip with sweet
wine,
And all the hills shall flow *with it*.
14 I will bring back the captives of My
people Israel;
They shall build the waste cities
and inhabit *them;*
They shall plant vineyards and drink
wine from them;
They shall also make gardens and
eat fruit from them.
15 I will plant them in their land,
And no longer shall they be
pulled up
From the land I have given them,"
Says the LORD your God.

9:11 [a]Literally *booth,* figure of a deposed dynasty **9:12** [a]Septuagint reads *mankind.*



THE BOOK OF

Obadiah



The Coming Judgment on Edom

The vision of Obadiah.

Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom
(We have heard a report from the LORD,
And a messenger has been sent among the nations, *saying*,
"Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle"):

2 "Behold, I will make you small among the nations;
You shall be greatly despised.
3 The pride of your heart has deceived you,
You who dwell in the clefts of the rock,
Whose habitation is high;
You who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'
4 Though you ascend *as* high as the eagle,
And though you set your nest among the stars,
From there I will bring you down," says the LORD.

5 "If thieves had come to you,
If robbers by night—
Oh, how you will be cut off!—
Would they not have stolen till they had enough?
If grape-gatherers had come to you,
Would they not have left *some* gleanings?

6 "Oh, how Esau shall be searched out!
How his hidden treasures shall be sought after!
7 All the men in your confederacy
Shall force you to the border;
The men at peace with you
Shall deceive you *and* prevail against you.
Those who eat your bread shall lay a trap[a] for you.
No one is aware of it.

8 "Will I not in that day," says the LORD,
"Even destroy the wise *men* from Edom,
And understanding from the mountains of Esau?
9 Then your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed,
To the end that everyone from the mountains of Esau
May be cut off by slaughter.

Edom Mistreated His Brother

10 "For violence against your brother Jacob,
Shame shall cover you,
And you shall be cut off forever.
11 In the day that you stood on the other side—
In the day that strangers carried captive his forces,
When foreigners entered his gates
And cast lots for Jerusalem—
Even you *were* as one of them.

12 "But you should not have gazed on the day of your brother
In the day of his captivity;[a]
Nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah
In the day of their destruction;
Nor should you have spoken proudly
In the day of distress.
13 You should not have entered the gate of My people
In the day of their calamity.
Indeed, you should not have gazed on their affliction
In the day of their calamity,
Nor laid *hands* on their substance
In the day of their calamity.
14 You should not have stood at the crossroads
To cut off those among them who escaped;

7 [a]Or *wound*, or *plot* **12** [a]Literally *on the day he became a foreigner*

Nor should you have delivered up
those among them who remained
In the day of distress.

15 "For the day of the LORD upon all the
nations *is* near;
As you have done, it shall be done to
you;
Your reprisal shall return upon your
own head.
16 For as you drank on My holy mountain,
So shall all the nations drink continually;
Yes, they shall drink, and swallow,
And they shall be as though they had
never been.

Israel's Final Triumph

17 "But on Mount Zion there shall be
deliverance,
And there shall be holiness;
The house of Jacob shall possess their
possessions.
18 The house of Jacob shall be a fire,
And the house of Joseph a flame;
But the house of Esau *shall be* stubble;
They shall kindle them and devour them,
And no survivor shall *remain* of the
house of Esau,"
For the LORD has spoken.

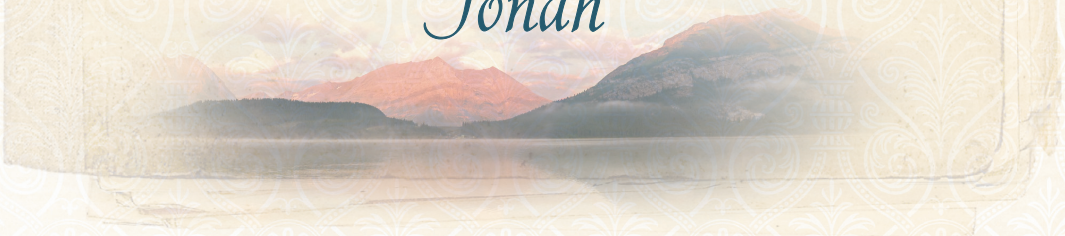
19 The South[a] shall possess the
mountains of Esau,
And the Lowland shall possess Philistia.
They shall possess the fields of Ephraim
And the fields of Samaria.
Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead.
20 And the captives of this host of the
children of Israel
Shall possess the land of the Canaanites
As far as Zarephath.
The captives of Jerusalem who are in
Sepharad
Shall possess the cities of the South.[a]
21 Then saviors[a] shall come to Mount Zion
To judge the mountains of Esau,
And the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

19 [a]Hebrew *Negev* **20** [a]Hebrew *Negev* **21** [a]Or *deliverers*



THE BOOK OF

Jonah



Jonah's Disobedience

1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah
the son of Amittai, saying, 2"Arise, go to
Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against
it; for their wickedness has come up before
Me." 3But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish
from the presence of the LORD. He went
down to Joppa, and found a ship going to
Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down
into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the
presence of the LORD.

The Storm at Sea

4But the LORD sent out a great wind on
the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on
the sea, so that the ship was about to be
broken up.

5Then the mariners were afraid; and
every man cried out to his god, and threw
the cargo that *was* in the ship into the sea,
to lighten the load.[a] But Jonah had gone
down into the lowest parts of the ship, had
lain down, and was fast asleep.

6So the captain came to him, and said
to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise,
call on your God; perhaps your God will
consider us, so that we may not perish."

7And they said to one another, "Come,
let us cast lots, that we may know for whose
cause this trouble *has come* upon us." So they
cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8Then they
said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause *is*
this trouble upon us? What is your occupa-
tion? And where do you come from? What is
your country? And of what people are you?"

9So he said to them, "I *am* a Hebrew;
and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven,
who made the sea and the dry *land*."

Jonah Thrown into the Sea

10Then the men were exceedingly afraid,
and said to him, "Why have you done
this?" For the men knew that he fled from
the presence of the LORD, because he had
told them. 11Then they said to him, "What
shall we do to you that the sea may be calm
for us?"—for the sea was growing more
tempestuous.

12And he said to them, "Pick me up and
throw me into the sea; then the sea will
become calm for you. For I know that this
great tempest *is* because of me."

13Nevertheless the men rowed hard to
return to land, but they could not, for the sea
continued to grow more tempestuous against
them. 14Therefore they cried out to the LORD
and said, "We pray, O LORD, please do not
let us perish for this man's life, and do not
charge us with innocent blood; for You, O
LORD, have done as it pleased You." 15So they
picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea,
and the sea ceased from its raging. 16Then the
men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered
a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.

Jonah's Prayer and Deliverance

17Now the LORD had prepared a great
fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in
the belly of the fish three days and three
nights.

2 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God
from the fish's belly. 2And he said:

"I cried out to the LORD because of my
affliction,
And He answered me.

"Out of the belly of Sheol I cried,
And You heard my voice.
3 For You cast me into the deep,
Into the heart of the seas,
And the floods surrounded me;
All Your billows and Your waves passed
over me.
4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out of
Your sight;

1:5 [a]Literally *from upon them*

THE HOPE IN *Music*

At Homecoming concerts we talk and think and sing a lot about hope. Over the years we have found that hope is not some wispy, illusive figment of sentimental phrases; it is a tough, resilient, enduring reality.

The morning after Anthony Burger collapsed at the piano in the middle of a concert during the Homecoming Caribbean cruise, the Hoppers sang a song Connie had asked us to write about hope. It was as if we had never heard the words before—even though we'd written the song:

A hope that sometimes whispers, a hope that sometimes shouts;
Sometimes hope's mighty gale will part the sea of doubt.
Hope calms the raging fevers, commands the storms of pain.
Hope turns life's threatening tempests to gentle, cooling rain.

For the Homecoming family of artists, in spite of the most distressing and unexpected circumstances, hope came erupting to the surface of our consciousness. This hope endures. This hope carries us through this life and all it brings, and then transports us to the greater life in a greater place.

Those who have lived longer than we have, those giants along our path, have constantly pointed to this hope. They have modeled for us how the hope we have within us is lived out over the long haul. We thank God, for their message has served us so well on our journey.

Yet I will look again toward Your holy
temple.'
5 The waters surrounded me, *even* to
my soul;
The deep closed around me;
Weeds were wrapped around my head.
6 I went down to the moorings of the
mountains;
The earth with its bars *closed* behind
me forever;
Yet You have brought up my life from
the pit,
O LORD, my God.

7 "When my soul fainted within me,
I remembered the LORD;
And my prayer went *up* to You,
Into Your holy temple.

8 "Those who regard worthless idols
Forsake their own Mercy.
9 But I will sacrifice to You
With the voice of thanksgiving;
I will pay what I have vowed.
Salvation *is* of the LORD."

10So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry *land*.

Jonah Preaches at Nineveh

3 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you." 3So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey[a] *in extent*. 4And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

The People of Nineveh Believe

5So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. 6Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes. 7And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying,

Let neither man nor beast, herd nor
flock, taste anything; do not let them
eat, or drink water. 8But let man and
beast be covered with sackcloth, and
cry mightily to God; yes, let every
one turn from his evil way and from
the violence that is in his hands.
9Who can tell *if* God will turn and
relent, and turn away from His fierce
anger, so that we may not perish?

10Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

Jonah's Anger and God's Kindness

4 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. 2So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You *are* a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. 3Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for *it is* better for me to die than to live!"

4Then the LORD said, "*Is it* right for you to be angry?"

5So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. 6And the LORD God prepared a plant[a] and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. 7But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it *so* damaged the plant that it withered. 8And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "*It is* better for me to die than to live."

9Then God said to Jonah, "*Is it* right for you to be angry about the plant?"

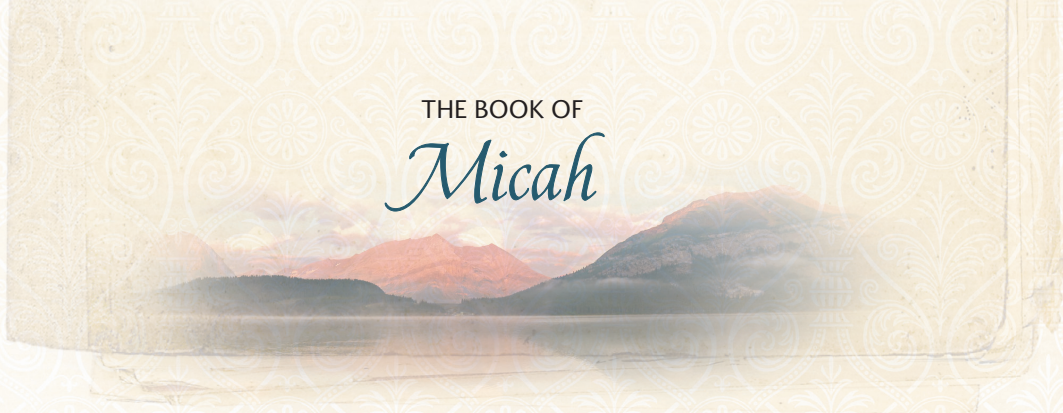
And he said, "*It is* right for me to be angry, even to death!"

10But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. 11And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?"

3:3 [a]Exact meaning unknown **4:6** [a]Hebrew *kikayon*, exact identity unknown

THE BOOK OF

Micah



1 The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

The Coming Judgment on Israel

2 Hear, all you peoples!
Listen, O earth, and all that is in it!
Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you,
The Lord from His holy temple.

3 For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place;
He will come down
And tread on the high places of the earth.
4 The mountains will melt under Him,
And the valleys will split
Like wax before the fire,
Like waters poured down a steep place.
5 All this is for the transgression of Jacob
And for the sins of the house of Israel.
What *is* the transgression of Jacob?
Is it not Samaria?
And what *are* the high places of Judah?
Are they not Jerusalem?

6 "Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field,
Places for planting a vineyard;
I will pour down her stones into the valley,
And I will uncover her foundations.
7 All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces,
And all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire;
All her idols I will lay desolate,
For she gathered *it* from the pay of a harlot,
And they shall return to the pay of a harlot."

Mourning for Israel and Judah

8 Therefore I will wail and howl,
I will go stripped and naked;
I will make a wailing like the jackals
And a mourning like the ostriches,
9 For her wounds *are* incurable.
For it has come to Judah;
It has come to the gate of My people—
To Jerusalem.

10 Tell *it* not in Gath,
Weep not at all;
In Beth Aphrah[a]
Roll yourself in the dust.
11 Pass by in naked shame, you inhabitant of Shaphir;
The inhabitant of Zaanan[a] does not go out.
Beth Ezel mourns;
Its place to stand is taken away from you.

12 For the inhabitant of Maroth pined[a] for good,
But disaster came down from the LORD
To the gate of Jerusalem.
13 O inhabitant of Lachish,
Harness the chariot to the swift steeds
(She *was* the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion),
For the transgressions of Israel were found in you.

14 Therefore you shall give presents to Moresheth Gath;[a]
The houses of Achzib[b] *shall be* a lie to the kings of Israel.
15 I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of Mareshah;[a]
The glory of Israel shall come to Adullam.
16 Make yourself bald and cut off your hair,

1:10 [a]Literally *House of Dust* **1:11** [a]Literally *Going Out* **1:12** [a]Literally *was sick* **1:14** [a]Literally *Possession of Gath* [b]Literally *Lie* **1:15** [a]Literally *Inheritance*

Because of your precious children;
Enlarge your baldness like an eagle,
For they shall go from you into
captivity.

Woe to Evildoers

2 Woe to those who devise iniquity,
And work out evil on their beds!
At morning light they practice it,
Because it is in the power of their hand.
2 They covet fields and take *them* by
violence,
Also houses, and seize *them.*
So they oppress a man and his house,
A man and his inheritance.

3 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Behold, against this family I am
devising disaster,
From which you cannot remove your
necks;
Nor shall you walk haughtily,
For this *is* an evil time.
4 In that day *one* shall take up a proverb
against you,
And lament with a bitter lamentation,
saying:
'We are utterly destroyed!
He has changed the heritage of my
people;
How He has removed *it* from me!
To a turncoat He has divided our
fields.'"

5 Therefore you will have no one to
determine boundaries[a] by lot
In the assembly of the LORD.

Lying Prophets

6 "Do not prattle," *you say to those* who
prophesy.
So they shall not prophesy to you;[a]
They shall not return insult for insult.[b]
7 *You who are* named the house of Jacob:
"Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted?
Are these His doings?
Do not My words do good
To him who walks uprightly?

8 "Lately My people have risen up as an
enemy—
You pull off the robe with the garment
From those who trust *you,* as they
pass by,
Like men returned from war.
9 The women of My people you cast out
From their pleasant houses;
From their children
You have taken away My glory forever.

10 "Arise and depart,
For this *is* not *your* rest;
Because it is defiled, it shall destroy,
Yes, with utter destruction.
11 If a man should walk in a false spirit
And speak a lie, *saying,*
'I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,'
Even he would be the prattler of this
people.

Israel Restored

12 "I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob,
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;
I will put them together like sheep of
the fold,[a]
Like a flock in the midst of their pasture;
They shall make a loud noise because
of *so many* people.
13 The one who breaks open will come up
before them;
They will break out,
Pass through the gate,
And go out by it;
Their king will pass before them,
With the LORD at their head."

Wicked Rulers and Prophets

3 And I said:

"Hear now, O heads of Jacob,
And you rulers of the house of Israel:
Is it not for you to know justice?
2 You who hate good and love evil;
Who strip the skin from My people,[a]
And the flesh from their bones;
3 Who also eat the flesh of My people,
Flay their skin from them,
Break their bones,
And chop *them* in pieces
Like *meat* for the pot,
Like flesh in the caldron."

4 Then they will cry to the LORD,

2:5 [a]Literally *one casting a surveyor's line* **2:6** [a]Literally *to these* [b]Vulgate reads *He shall not take shame.* **2:12** [a]Hebrew *Bozrah* **3:2** [a]Literally *them*

Arise and depart,
for this is not your rest.
There remains therefore
a rest for the people of God.
MICAH 2:10

Does not your heart often say: "I can't get used to this world. It breaks my heart; it makes me sick; it makes me restless; I don't belong"?

May we never get used to it! May we never get numb to the atrocities, the injustices, the greed and the violence. This is not our home. This is not the place to come in by the fire and rest. Our only rest here is in the ark. In Jesus our spirits are at rest. But in the world is the flood, the storm, the raging winds. God is in the process of redeeming what is fallen and setting right what Satan is intent on destroying.

We are to be obedient to anything God is doing, but we will never be at rest *in the world*. "It's only temporary" should be the way we feel about any provisions of earth, homes, land, cars, accomplishments. Our permanence is internal, and we can only be at rest in Him until we rest with Him.



But He will not hear them;
He will even hide His face from them
at that time,
Because they have been evil in their
deeds.

5 Thus says the LORD concerning the
prophets
Who make my people stray;
Who chant "Peace"
While they chew with their teeth,
But who prepare war against him
Who puts nothing into their mouths:
6 "Therefore you shall have night
without vision,
And you shall have darkness without
divination;
The sun shall go down on the prophets,
And the day shall be dark for them.
7 So the seers shall be ashamed,
And the diviners abashed;
Indeed they shall all cover their lips;
For *there is* no answer from God."

8 But truly I am full of power by the
Spirit of the LORD,
And of justice and might,
To declare to Jacob his transgression
And to Israel his sin.
9 Now hear this,
You heads of the house of Jacob
And rulers of the house of Israel,
Who abhor justice
And pervert all equity,
10 Who build up Zion with bloodshed
And Jerusalem with iniquity:
11 Her heads judge for a bribe,
Her priests teach for pay,
And her prophets divine for money.
Yet they lean on the LORD, and say,
"Is not the LORD among us?
No harm can come upon us."
12 Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple[a]
Like the bare hills of the forest.

The LORD's Reign in Zion

4 Now it shall come to pass in the latter
days
That the mountain of the LORD's house

3:12 [a]Literally *house*

Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And peoples shall flow to it.
2 Many nations shall come and say,
"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion the law shall go forth,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
3 He shall judge between many peoples,
And rebuke strong nations afar off;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.[a]

4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree,
And no one shall make *them* afraid;
For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.
5 For all people walk each in the name of his god,
But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
Forever and ever.

Zion's Future Triumph

6 "In that day," says the LORD,
"I will assemble the lame,
I will gather the outcast
And those whom I have afflicted;
7 I will make the lame a remnant,
And the outcast a strong nation;
So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion
From now on, even forever.
8 And you, O tower of the flock,
The stronghold of the daughter of Zion,
To you shall it come,
Even the former dominion shall come,
The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."

9 Now why do you cry aloud?
Is there no king in your midst?
Has your counselor perished?
For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor.
10 Be in pain, and labor to bring forth,
O daughter of Zion,
Like a woman in birth pangs.
For now you shall go forth from the city,
You shall dwell in the field,
And to Babylon you shall go.
There you shall be delivered;
There the LORD will redeem you
From the hand of your enemies.

11 Now also many nations have gathered against you,
Who say, "Let her be defiled,
And let our eye look upon Zion."
12 But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD,
Nor do they understand His counsel;
For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

13 "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion;
For I will make your horn iron,
And I will make your hooves bronze;
You shall beat in pieces many peoples;
I will consecrate their gain to the LORD,
And their substance to the Lord of the whole earth."

5 Now gather yourself in troops,
O daughter of troops;
He has laid siege against us;
They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.

The Coming Messiah

2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth *are* from of old,
From everlasting."

3 Therefore He shall give them up,
Until the time *that* she who is in labor has given birth;
Then the remnant of His brethren
Shall return to the children of Israel.
4 And He shall stand and feed *His flock*
In the strength of the LORD,

4:3 [a]Compare Isaiah 2:2–4

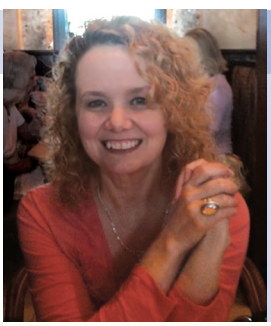
In the majesty of the name of the LORD
His God;
And they shall abide,
For now He shall be great
To the ends of the earth;
5 And this *One* shall be peace.

Judgment on Israel's Enemies

When the Assyrian comes into our land,
And when he treads in our palaces,
Then we will raise against him
Seven shepherds and eight princely men.
6 They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria,
And the land of Nimrod at its entrances;
Thus He shall deliver *us* from the Assyrian,
When he comes into our land
And when he treads within our borders.

7 Then the remnant of Jacob
Shall be in the midst of many peoples,
Like dew from the LORD,
Like showers on the grass,
That tarry for no man
Nor wait for the sons of men.
8 And the remnant of Jacob
Shall be among the Gentiles,
In the midst of many peoples,
Like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
Like a young lion among flocks of sheep,
Who, if he passes through,
Both treads down and tears in pieces,
And none can deliver.
9 Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries,
And all your enemies shall be cut off.

10 "And it shall be in that day," says the LORD,
"That I will cut off your horses from your midst
And destroy your chariots.
11 I will cut off the cities of your land
And throw down all your strongholds.



ROBERTA CROTEAU • Editor of *Homecoming Magazine,* Author

He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? | MICAH 6:8

In the movie *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Gregory Peck patiently tried to explain to his daughter, Scout, why people hate. She'd already seen it all around her: a strange boy who had condemned himself to a hermit's life for not being the same as everyone else and the poor boy at school whose only crime seems to be being poor. Then, looming over all of them, the innocent man already hanged for nothing more than being someone no one else wanted around. Someone they feared because they could not understand—and hate became the easiest way out.

Somehow in his gentle explanation, Peck's character managed to sum up life's pursuits in much the same way that Jesus did two thousand years earlier: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." It was as simple—and as complicated—as that. We who are not children listening on someone's knee know that it's much easier said than done. But when all is

12 I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
And you shall have no soothsayers.
13 Your carved images I will also cut off,
And your *sacred* pillars from your midst;
You shall no more worship the work of your hands;
14 I will pluck your wooden images[a] from your midst;
Thus I will destroy your cities.
15 And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury
On the nations that have not heard."[a]

God Pleads with Israel

6 Hear now what the LORD says:

"Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
And let the hills hear your voice.
2 Hear, O you mountains, the LORD's complaint,
And you strong foundations of the earth;
For the LORD has a complaint against His people,
And He will contend with Israel.

3 "O My people, what have I done to you?
And how have I wearied you?
Testify against Me.
4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
I redeemed you from the house of bondage;
And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
5 O My people, remember now
What Balak king of Moab counseled,
And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him,
From Acacia Grove[a] to Gilgal,
That you may know the righteousness of the LORD."

5:14 [a]Hebrew *Asherim*, Canaanite deities **5:15** [a]Or *obeyed*
6:5 [a]Hebrew *Shittim* (compare Numbers 25:1; Joshua 2:1; 3:1)

said and done, it really is the truth of life, the embodiment of what Micah says when he declares what God requires of us: "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (6:8).

Who can forget that incredible courtroom scene—a place where hate collided with the truth and Atticus Finch was in the fight of his life? As a simple lawyer, he knew the not-so-simple truth. When it would have been easier to walk away, easier to let hate take over all reason and go back home—away from all these unreasonable souls consumed by their own prejudices—he did the right thing. He stayed and fought for a friend. He fought for innocence lost and for the innocence found again. Maybe deep down he knew that what he helped others find in themselves meant that he, too, could keep it alive in himself.

There are no easy answers. And even in the movies, there isn't always a happy ending. Being true to his word, Atticus found, didn't guarantee happiness. It didn't even guarantee fairness. Yet it was still a lesson worth teaching his daughter, his neighbors, his enemies, and his friends. He said it was a sin to kill a mockingbird because mockingbirds just go busily about their lives and do nothing to hurt us. God gives us the same warning when it comes to people. Let go of the hurt and the "eyes for eyes." Love is all you need after all. And love can cover a multitude of sins.

Who is a God like You,
pardoning iniquity and
passing over the transgression
of the remnant of His heritage?
He does not retain His anger forever,
because He delights in mercy.
He will again have compassion on us,
and will subdue our iniquities.
You will cast all our sins into
the depths of the sea.
MICAH 7:18, 19

What an interesting choice of words: He "will subdue our iniquities." Could this be because iniquities are aggressors? They take over our lives. They march brazenly into areas we felt confident were safe areas for us, places we thought were secure, not a problem for us. By the time they move their way into our actions, they have long ago established boot camps in our souls and psyches. Our best instincts, our better natures have been taken captive by our inequities. But what wonderful news! God's anger is short-lived, but His mercy is forever. And His anger is aimed more at the Enemy than at us. He will have His children back! He will reclaim the love of His heart. His mercy strong-arms the iniquities that hold His children hostage to the ground. He will subdue them and set His children free to love Him.



6 With what shall I come before the LORD,
And bow myself before the High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt
offerings,
With calves a year old?
7 Will the LORD be pleased with
thousands of rams,
Ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn *for* my
transgression,
The fruit of my body *for* the sin of
my soul?

8 He has shown you, O man, what *is* good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

Punishment of Israel's Injustice

9 The LORD's voice cries to the city—
Wisdom shall see Your name:

"Hear the rod!
Who has appointed it?
10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness
In the house of the wicked,
And the short measure *that is* an
abomination?
11 Shall I count pure *those* with the
wicked scales,
And with the bag of deceitful weights?
12 For her rich men are full of violence,
Her inhabitants have spoken lies,
And their tongue is deceitful in their
mouth.

13 "Therefore I will also make *you* sick by
striking you,
By making *you* desolate because of
your sins.
14 You shall eat, but not be satisfied;
Hunger[a] *shall be* in your midst.
You may carry *some* away,[b] but shall not
save *them;*
And what you do rescue I will give over
to the sword.

15 "You shall sow, but not reap;
You shall tread the olives, but not
anoint yourselves with oil;
And *make* sweet wine, but not drink wine.

6:14 [a]Or *Emptiness* or *Humiliation* [b]Targum and Vulgate read *You shall take hold.*

16 For the statutes of Omri are kept;
All the works of Ahab's house *are done;*
And you walk in their counsels,
That I may make you a desolation,
And your inhabitants a hissing.
Therefore you shall bear the reproach
of My people."[a]

Sorrow for Israel's Sins

7 Woe is me!
For I am like those who gather
summer fruits,
Like those who glean vintage grapes;
There is no cluster to eat
Of the first-ripe fruit *which* my soul
desires.
2 The faithful *man* has perished from the
earth,
And *there is* no one upright among men.
They all lie in wait for blood;
Every man hunts his brother with a net.

3 That they may successfully do evil with
both hands—
The prince asks *for gifts,*
The judge *seeks* a bribe,
And the great *man* utters his evil desire;
So they scheme together.
4 The best of them *is* like a brier;
The most upright *is sharper* than a
thorn hedge;
The day of your watchman and your
punishment comes;
Now shall be their perplexity.

5 Do not trust in a friend;
Do not put your confidence in a
companion;
Guard the doors of your mouth
From her who lies in your bosom.
6 For son dishonors father,
Daughter rises against her mother,
Daughter-in-law against her
mother-in-law;
A man's enemies *are* the men of his
own household.
7 Therefore I will look to the LORD;
I will wait for the God of my salvation;
My God will hear me.

Israel's Confession and Comfort

8 Do not rejoice over me, my enemy;
When I fall, I will arise;
When I sit in darkness,
The LORD *will be* a light to me.
9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD,
Because I have sinned against Him,
Until He pleads my case
And executes justice for me.
He will bring me forth to the light;
I will see His righteousness.
10 Then *she who is* my enemy will see,
And shame will cover her who said to me,
"Where is the LORD your God?"
My eyes will see her;
Now she will be trampled down
Like mud in the streets.

11 *In* the day when your walls are to be built,
In that day the decree shall go far and
wide.[a]
12 *In* that day they[a] shall come to you
From Assyria and the fortified cities,[b]
From the fortress[c] to the River,[d]
From sea to sea,
And mountain *to* mountain.
13 Yet the land shall be desolate
Because of those who dwell in it,
And for the fruit of their deeds.

May you use the gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content with yourself just the way you are. Let this knowledge settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.

MOTHER TERESA

God Will Forgive Israel

14 Shepherd Your people with Your staff,
The flock of Your heritage,
Who dwell solitarily *in* a woodland,
In the midst of Carmel;
Let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead,
As in days of old.

15 "As in the days when you came out of
the land of Egypt,

6:16 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *of nations.* **7:11** [a]Or *the boundary shall be extended* **7:12** [a]Literally *he,* collective of the captives [b]Hebrew *arey mazor,* possibly *cities of Egypt* [c]Hebrew *mazor,* possibly *Egypt* [d]That is, the Euphrates

I will show them[a] wonders."

16 The nations shall see and be ashamed
of all their might;
They shall put *their* hand over *their*
mouth;
Their ears shall be deaf.
17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent;
They shall crawl from their holes
like snakes of the earth.
They shall be afraid of the LORD
our God,
And shall fear because of You.
18 Who *is* a God like You,
Pardoning iniquity
And passing over the transgression of
the remnant of His heritage?

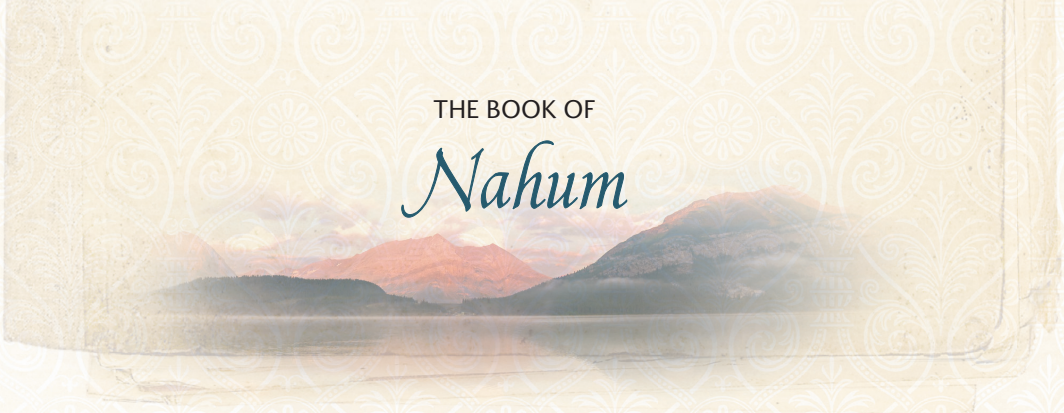
He does not retain His anger forever,
Because He delights *in* mercy.
19 He will again have compassion on us,
And will subdue our iniquities.

You will cast all our[a] sins
Into the depths of the sea.
20 You will give truth to Jacob
And mercy to Abraham,
Which You have sworn to our fathers
From days of old.

7:15 [a]Literally *him*, collective for the captives **7:19** [a]Literally *their*

THE BOOK OF

Nahum



1 The burden[a] against Nineveh. The book
of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

God's Wrath on His Enemies

2 God *is* jealous, and the LORD avenges;
The LORD avenges and *is* furious.
The LORD will take vengeance on His
adversaries,
And He reserves *wrath* for His enemies;
3 The LORD *is* slow to anger and great in
power,
And will not at all acquit *the wicked*.

The LORD has His way
In the whirlwind and in the storm,
And the clouds *are* the dust of His feet.
4 He rebukes the sea and makes it dry,
And dries up all the rivers.
Bashan and Carmel wither,
And the flower of Lebanon wilts.
5 The mountains quake before Him,
The hills melt,
And the earth heaves[a] at His presence,
Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.

6 Who can stand before His
indignation?
And who can endure the fierceness of
His anger?
His fury is poured out like fire,
And the rocks are thrown down by Him.

7 The LORD *is* good,
A stronghold in the day of trouble;
And He knows those who trust in Him.
8 But with an overflowing flood
He will make an utter end of its place,
And darkness will pursue His enemies.

9 What do you conspire against the LORD?
He will make an utter end *of it*.
Affliction will not rise up a second time.
10 For while tangled *like* thorns,
And while drunken *like* drunkards,
They shall be devoured like stubble
fully dried.
11 From you comes forth *one*
Who plots evil against the LORD,
A wicked counselor.

12 Thus says the LORD:

"Though *they are* safe, and likewise many,
Yet in this manner they will be cut down
When he passes through.
Though I have afflicted you,
I will afflict you no more;
13 For now I will break off his yoke from you,
And burst your bonds apart."

14 The LORD has given a command
concerning you:
"Your name shall be perpetuated no
longer.
Out of the house of your gods
I will cut off the carved image and the
molded image.
I will dig your grave,
For you are vile."

15 Behold, on the mountains
The feet of him who brings good tidings,
Who proclaims peace!
O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,
Perform your vows.
For the wicked one shall no more pass
through you;
He is utterly cut off.

The Destruction of Nineveh

2 He who scatters[a] has come up before
your face.
Man the fort!
Watch the road!
Strengthen *your* flanks!
Fortify *your* power mightily.

1:1 [a]Or *oracle* **1:5** [a]Targum reads *burns*. **2:1** [a]Vulgate reads *He who destroys*.

2 For the LORD will restore the excellence
of Jacob
Like the excellence of Israel,
For the emptiers have emptied them out
And ruined their vine branches.

3 The shields of his mighty men *are*
made red,
The valiant men *are* in scarlet.
The chariots *come* with flaming torches
In the day of his preparation,
And the spears are brandished.[a]
4 The chariots rage in the streets,
They jostle one another in the broad
roads;
They seem like torches,
They run like lightning.

5 He remembers his nobles;
They stumble in their walk;
They make haste to her walls,
And the defense is prepared.
6 The gates of the rivers are opened,
And the palace is dissolved.
7 It is decreed:[a]
She shall be led away captive,
She shall be brought up;
And her maidservants shall lead *her* as
with the voice of doves,
Beating their breasts.

8 Though Nineveh of old *was* like a pool
of water,
Now they flee away.
"Halt! Halt!" *they cry;*
But no one turns back.
9 Take spoil of silver!
Take spoil of gold!
There is no end of treasure,
Or wealth of every desirable prize.
10 She is empty, desolate, and waste!
The heart melts, and the knees shake;
Much pain *is* in every side,
And all their faces are drained of color.[a]

11 Where *is* the dwelling of the lions,
And the feeding place of the young
lions,
Where the lion walked, the lioness *and*
lion's cub,
And no one made *them* afraid?
12 The lion tore in pieces enough for his
cubs,
Killed for his lionesses,
Filled his caves with prey,
And his dens with flesh.

13 "Behold, I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts, "I will burn your[a] chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more."

The Woe of Nineveh

3 Woe to the bloody city!
It *is* all full of lies *and* robbery.
Its victim never departs.
2 The noise of a whip
And the noise of rattling wheels,
Of galloping horses,
Of clattering chariots!
3 Horsemen charge with bright sword
and glittering spear.
There is a multitude of slain,
A great number of bodies,
Countless corpses—
They stumble over the corpses—
4 Because of the multitude of harlotries
of the seductive harlot,
The mistress of sorceries,
Who sells nations through her harlotries,
And families through her sorceries.

5 "Behold, I *am* against you," says the
LORD of hosts;
"I will lift your skirts over your face,
I will show the nations your nakedness,
And the kingdoms your shame.
6 I will cast abominable filth upon you,
Make you vile,
And make you a spectacle.
7 It shall come to pass *that* all who look
upon you
Will flee from you, and say,
'Nineveh is laid waste!
Who will bemoan her?'
Where shall I seek comforters for you?"

8 Are you better than No Amon[a]
That was situated by the River,[b]
That had the waters around her,
Whose rampart *was* the sea,
Whose wall *was* the sea?

2:3 [a]Literally *the cypresses are shaken;* Septuagint and Syriac read *the horses rush about;* Vulgate reads *the drivers are stupefied.* **2:7** [a]Hebrew *Huzzab* **2:10** [a]Compare Joel 2:6 **2:13** [a]Literally *her* **3:8** [a]That is, ancient Thebes; Targum and Vulgate read *populous Alexandria.* [b]Literally *rivers,* that is, the Nile and the surrounding canals

9 Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength,
And *it was* boundless;
Put and Lubim were your[a] helpers.
10 Yet she *was* carried away,
She went into captivity;
Her young children also were dashed to pieces
At the head of every street;
They cast lots for her honorable men,
And all her great men were bound in chains.
11 You also will be drunk;
You will be hidden;
You also will seek refuge from the enemy.

12 All your strongholds *are* fig trees with ripened figs:
If they are shaken,
They fall into the mouth of the eater.
13 Surely, your people in your midst *are* women!
The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies;
Fire shall devour the bars of your *gates*.

14 Draw your water for the siege!
Fortify your strongholds!
Go into the clay and tread the mortar!
Make strong the brick kiln!
15 There the fire will devour you,
The sword will cut you off;
It will eat you up like a locust.

Make yourself many—like the locust!
Make yourself many— like the *swarming* locusts!
16 You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven.
The locust plunders and flies away.
17 Your commanders *are* like *swarming* locusts,
And your generals like great grasshoppers,
Which camp in the hedges on a cold day;
When the sun rises they flee away,
And the place where they *are* is not known.

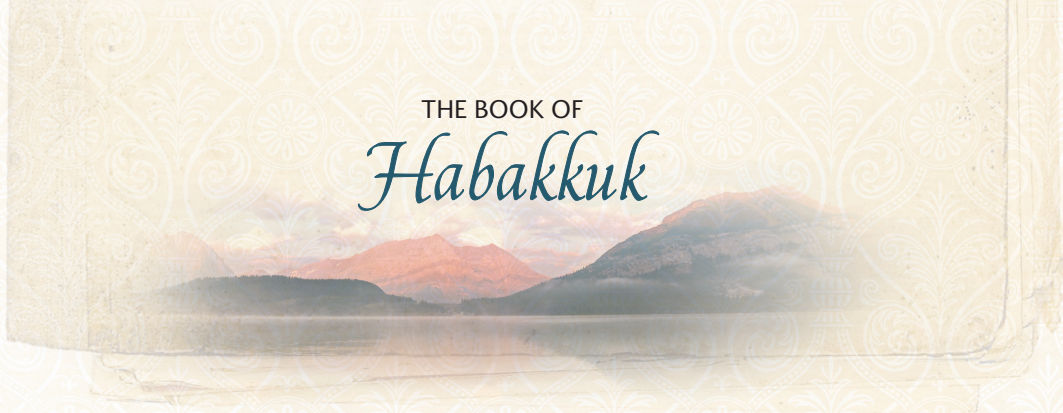
18 Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria;
Your nobles rest *in the dust*.
Your people are scattered on the mountains,
And no one gathers them.
19 Your injury *has* no healing,
Your wound is severe.
All who hear news of you
Will clap *their* hands over you,
For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?

3:9 [a]Septuagint reads *her*.



THE BOOK OF

Habakkuk



1 The burden[a] which the prophet Habakkuk saw.

The Prophet's Question

2 O LORD, how long shall I cry,
And You will not hear?
Even cry out to You, "Violence!"
And You will not save.
3 Why do You show me iniquity,
And cause *me* to see trouble?
For plundering and violence *are* before me;
There is strife, and contention arises.
4 Therefore the law is powerless,
And justice never goes forth.
For the wicked surround the righteous;
Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.

The LORD's Reply

5 "Look among the nations and watch—
Be utterly astounded!
For *I will* work a work in your days
Which you would not believe, though it were told *you.*
6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans,
A bitter and hasty nation
Which marches through the breadth of the earth,
To possess dwelling places *that are* not theirs.
7 They are terrible and dreadful;
Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves.
8 Their horses also are swifter than leopards,
And more fierce than evening wolves.
Their chargers charge ahead;
Their cavalry comes from afar;
They fly as the eagle *that* hastens to eat.

9 "They all come for violence;
Their faces are set *like* the east wind.
They gather captives like sand.
10 They scoff at kings,
And princes are scorned by them.
They deride every stronghold,
For they heap up earthen *mounds* and seize it.
11 Then *his* mind[a] changes, and he transgresses;
He commits offense,
Ascribing this power to his god."

The Prophet's Second Question

12 Are You not from everlasting,
O LORD my God, my Holy One?
We shall not die.
O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment;
O Rock, You have marked them for correction.
13 *You are* of purer eyes than to behold evil,
And cannot look on wickedness.
Why do You look on those who deal treacherously,
And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours
A *person* more righteous than he?
14 *Why* do You make men like fish of the sea,
Like creeping things *that have* no ruler over them?

15 They take up all of them with a hook,
They catch them in their net,
And gather them in their dragnet.
Therefore they rejoice and are glad.
16 Therefore they sacrifice to their net,
And burn incense to their dragnet;
Because by them their share *is* sumptuous
And their food plentiful.
17 Shall they therefore empty their net,

1:1 [a]Or *oracle* **1:11** [a]Literally *spirit* or *wind*

And continue to slay nations
without pity?

2 I will stand my watch
And set myself on the rampart,
And watch to see what He will say to me,
And what I will answer when I am
corrected.

The Just Live by Faith

2 Then the LORD answered me and said:

"Write the vision
And make *it* plain on tablets,
That he may run who reads it.
3 For the vision *is* yet for an appointed
time;
But at the end it will speak, and it will
not lie.
Though it tarries, wait for it;
Because it will surely come,
It will not tarry.

4 "Behold the proud,
His soul is not upright in him;
But the just shall live by his faith.

Woe to the Wicked

5 "Indeed, because he transgresses by wine,
He is a proud man,
And he does not stay at home.
Because he enlarges his desire as hell,[a]
And he *is* like death, and cannot be
satisfied,
He gathers to himself all nations
And heaps up for himself all peoples.

6 "Will not all these take up a proverb
against him,
And a taunting riddle against him,
and say,
'Woe to him who increases
What is not his—how long?
And to him who loads himself with
many pledges'?[a]
7 Will not your creditors[a] rise up
suddenly?
Will they not awaken who oppress you?
And you will become their booty.
8 Because you have plundered many
nations,
All the remnant of the people shall
plunder you,
Because of men's blood
And the violence of the land *and*
the city,
And of all who dwell in it.

9 "Woe to him who covets evil gain for his
house,
That he may set his nest on high,
That he may be delivered from the
power of disaster!
10 You give shameful counsel to your
house,
Cutting off many peoples,
And sin *against* your soul.
11 For the stone will cry out from the wall,
And the beam from the timbers will
answer it.

12 "Woe to him who builds a town with
bloodshed,
Who establishes a city by iniquity!
13 Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts
That the peoples labor to feed the fire,[a]
And nations weary themselves in vain?
14 For the earth will be filled
With the knowledge of the glory of
the LORD,
As the waters cover the sea.

15 "Woe to him who gives drink to his
neighbor,
Pressing[a] *him to* your bottle,
Even to make *him* drunk,
That you may look on his nakedness!
16 You are filled with shame instead
of glory.
You also—drink!
And be exposed as uncircumcised![a]
The cup of the LORD's right hand *will be*
turned against you,
And utter shame will be on your glory.
17 For the violence *done to* Lebanon will
cover you,
And the plunder of beasts *which* made
them afraid,
Because of men's blood
And the violence of the land *and*
the city,
And of all who dwell in it.

2:5 [a]Or *Sheol* **2:6** [a]Syriac and Vulgate read *thick clay.* **2:7** [a]Literally *those who bite you* **2:13** [a]Literally *for what satisfies fire,* that is, for what is of no lasting value **2:15** [a]Literally *Attaching* or *Joining* **2:16** [a]Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *And reel!;* Syriac and Vulgate read *And fall fast asleep!*

18 "What profit is the image, that its maker
should carve it,
The molded image, a teacher of lies,
That the maker of its mold should
trust in it,
To make mute idols?
19 Woe to him who says to wood,
'Awake!'
To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!'
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and
silver,
Yet in it there is no breath at all.

20 "But the LORD is in His holy temple.
Let all the earth keep silence
before Him."

The Prophet's Prayer

3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.[a]

2 O LORD, I have heard Your speech *and*
was afraid;
O LORD, revive Your work in the midst
of the years!
In the midst of the years make *it* known;
In wrath remember mercy.

3 God came from Teman,
The Holy One from Mount Paran.
Selah

3:1 [a]Exact meaning unknown



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills. | HABAKKUK 3:19

To be a grandparent is to have a view from a high hill. You remember starting in the valley with your small babies and struggling and working your way up that hill. There were so many obstacles in the way—the trees, the rocks, the streams to be forded. You carry your children's weight as well as your own, and you're walking uphill. There are wolves along the way, so you stay close together. You build your own fire for warmth and huddle close together. You have very little panorama, very little overview, and it's very hard to make it through each day.

But to be a grandparent is to have reached the top of that hill, to be able to look down and see the panorama, see the overview of what is happening in the valley and the long, hard climb. You can look at the new family working its way up the hill and have great compassion, because you know what it's like—you've made the climb. There is much made of grandparents loving too much—of spoiling their grandchildren. It's only because they see it all so much more clearly than they did when they were the climbers, and they save their nos for the big things.

This is a wonderful parallel to those who have gone on before us to the high hill of heaven. The Bible tells us that as Christians we have a "cloud of witnesses" about us—watching—and cheering us on (Heb. 12:1).

His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of His praise.
4 *His* brightness was like the light;
He had rays *flashing* from His hand,
And there His power *was* hidden.
5 Before Him went pestilence,
And fever followed at His feet.

6 He stood and measured the earth;
He looked and startled the nations.
And the everlasting mountains were scattered,
The perpetual hills bowed.
His ways *are* everlasting.
7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction;
The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

8 O LORD, were *You* displeased with the rivers,
Was Your anger against the rivers,
Was Your wrath against the sea,
That You rode on Your horses,
Your chariots of salvation?
9 Your bow was made quite ready;
Oaths were sworn over *Your* arrows.[a]
Selah

You divided the earth with rivers.
10 The mountains saw You *and* trembled;
The overflowing of the water passed by.
The deep uttered its voice,
And lifted its hands on high.
11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation;
At the light of Your arrows they went,
At the shining of Your glittering spear.

12 You marched through the land in indignation;
You trampled the nations in anger.
13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people,
For salvation with Your Anointed.
You struck the head from the house of the wicked,
By laying bare from foundation to neck.
Selah

14 You thrust through with his own arrows
The head of his villages.
They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me;
Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.
15 You walked through the sea with Your horses,
Through the heap of great waters.

16 When I heard, my body trembled;
My lips quivered at *the* voice;
Rottenness entered my bones;
And I trembled in myself,
That I might rest in the day of trouble.
When he comes up to the people,
He will invade them with his troops.

A Hymn of Faith

17 Though the fig tree may not blossom,
Nor fruit be on the vines;
Though the labor of the olive may fail,
And the fields yield no food;
Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls—
18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The LORD God[a] is my strength;
He will make my feet like deer's *feet,*
And He will make me walk on my high hills.

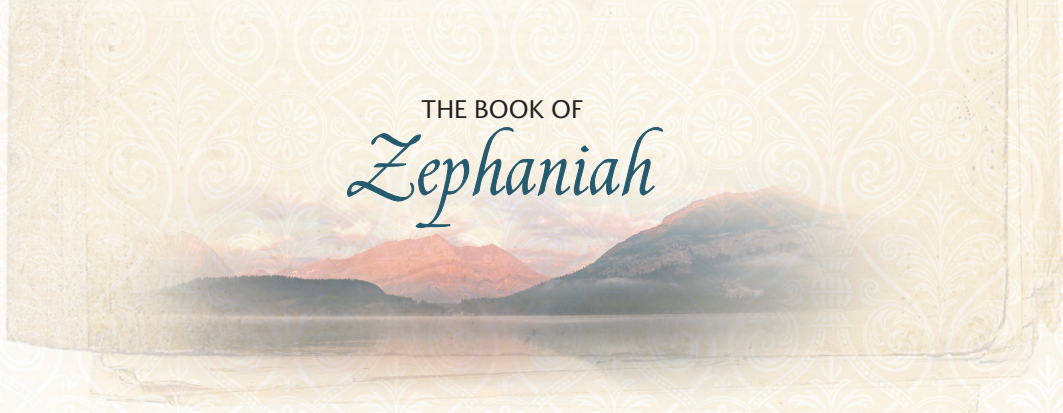
To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

3:9 [a]Literally *rods* or *tribes* (compare verse 14) **3:19** [a]Hebrew *YHWH Adonai*



THE BOOK OF

Zephaniah



1 The word of the LORD which came to
Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son
of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of
Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of
Amon, king of Judah.

The Great Day of the LORD

2 "I will utterly consume everything
From the face of the land,"
Says the LORD;
3 "I will consume man and beast;
I will consume the birds of the heavens,
The fish of the sea,
And the stumbling blocks[a] along with
the wicked.
I will cut off man from the face of the
land,"
Says the LORD.

4 "I will stretch out My hand against
Judah,
And against all the inhabitants of
Jerusalem.
I will cut off every trace of Baal from
this place,
The names of the idolatrous priests[a]
with the *pagan* priests—
5 Those who worship the host of heaven
on the housetops;
Those who worship and swear *oaths* by
the LORD,
But who *also* swear by Milcom;[a]
6 Those who have turned back from
following the LORD,
And have not sought the LORD, nor
inquired of Him."
7 Be silent in the presence of the Lord
GOD;
For the day of the LORD *is* at hand,
For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
He has invited[a] His guests.

8 "And it shall be,
In the day of the LORD's sacrifice,
That I will punish the princes and the
king's children,
And all such as are clothed with
foreign apparel.
9 In the same day I will punish
All those who leap over the threshold,[a]
Who fill their masters' houses with
violence and deceit.

10 "And there shall be on that day," says
the LORD,
"The sound of a mournful cry from the
Fish Gate,
A wailing from the Second Quarter,
And a loud crashing from the hills.
11 Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh![a]
For all the merchant people are cut
down;
All those who handle money are cut off.

12 "And it shall come to pass at that time
That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
And punish the men
Who are settled in complacency,[a]
Who say in their heart,
'The LORD will not do good,
Nor will He do evil.'
13 Therefore their goods shall become
booty,
And their houses a desolation;
They shall build houses, but not
inhabit *them;*
They shall plant vineyards, but not
drink their wine."

14 The great day of the LORD *is* near;
It is near and hastens quickly.
The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter;
There the mighty men shall cry out.
15 That day *is* a day of wrath,
A day of trouble and distress,

1:3 [a]Figurative of idols **1:4** [a]Hebrew *chemarim* **1:5** [a]Or *Malcam,* an Ammonite god, also called *Molech* (compare Leviticus 18:21) **1:7** [a]Literally *set apart, consecrated* **1:9** [a]Compare 1 Samuel 5:5 **1:11** [a]Literally *Mortar,* a market district of Jerusalem **1:12** [a]Literally *on their lees,* that is, settled like the dregs of wine

A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
16 A day of trumpet and alarm
Against the fortified cities
And against the high towers.

17 "I will bring distress upon men,
And they shall walk like blind men,
Because they have sinned against the LORD;
Their blood shall be poured out like dust,
And their flesh like refuse."

18 Neither their silver nor their gold
Shall be able to deliver them
In the day of the LORD's wrath;
But the whole land shall be devoured
By the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make speedy riddance
Of all those who dwell in the land.

A Call to Repentance

2 Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together,
O undesirable[a] nation,
2 Before the decree is issued,
Or the day passes like chaff,
Before the LORD's fierce anger comes upon you,
Before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you!
3 Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth,
Who have upheld His justice.
Seek righteousness, seek humility.
It may be that you will be hidden
In the day of the LORD's anger.

Judgment on Nations

4 For Gaza shall be forsaken,
And Ashkelon desolate;
They shall drive out Ashdod at noonday,
And Ekron shall be uprooted.
5 Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast,
The nation of the Cherethites!
The word of the LORD *is* against you,
O Canaan, land of the Philistines:
"I will destroy you;
So there shall be no inhabitant."
6 The seacoast shall be pastures,
With shelters[a] for shepherds and folds for flocks.
7 The coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah;
They shall feed *their* flocks there;
In the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening.
For the LORD their God will intervene for them,
And return their captives.

8 "I have heard the reproach of Moab,
And the insults of the people of Ammon,
With which they have reproached My people,
And made arrogant threats against their borders.
9 Therefore, as I live,"
Says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel,
"Surely Moab shall be like Sodom,
And the people of Ammon like Gomorrah—
Overrun with weeds and saltpits,
And a perpetual desolation.
The residue of My people shall plunder them,
And the remnant of My people shall possess them."

10 This they shall have for their pride,
Because they have reproached and made arrogant threats
Against the people of the LORD of hosts.
11 The LORD *will be* awesome to them,
For He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth;
People shall worship Him,
Each one from his place,
Indeed all the shores of the nations.

12 "You Ethiopians also,
You shall be slain by My sword."

13 And He will stretch out His hand against the north,
Destroy Assyria,
And make Nineveh a desolation,
As dry as the wilderness.
14 The herds shall lie down in her midst,
Every beast of the nation.
Both the pelican and the bittern
Shall lodge on the capitals *of* her *pillars;*
Their voice shall sing in the windows;
Desolation *shall be* at the threshold;
For He will lay bare the cedar work.

2:1 [a]Or *shameless* **2:6** [a]Literally *excavations,* either underground huts or cisterns

15 This is the rejoicing city
That dwelt securely,
That said in her heart,
"I *am it,* and *there is* none besides me."
How has she become a desolation,
A place for beasts to lie down!
Everyone who passes by her
Shall hiss and shake his fist.

The Wickedness of Jerusalem

3 Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted,
To the oppressing city!
2 She has not obeyed *His* voice,
She has not received correction;
She has not trusted in the LORD,
She has not drawn near to her God.

3 Her princes in her midst *are* roaring lions;
Her judges *are* evening wolves
That leave not a bone till morning.
4 Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people;
Her priests have polluted the sanctuary,
They have done violence to the law.
5 The LORD *is* righteous in her midst,
He will do no unrighteousness.
Every morning He brings His justice to light;
He never fails,
But the unjust knows no shame.

6 "I have cut off nations,
Their fortresses are devastated;
I have made their streets desolate,
With none passing by.
Their cities are destroyed;
There is no one, no inhabitant.



SOLVEIG LEITHAUG • Homecoming Artist, Soloist in Norway and U.S.

The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. | ZEPHANIAH 3:17

"The Lord sings," it says. As I read this, I can't help but wonder what the Lord's singing voice sounds like. And in my imagination I am convinced He, who is the Creator of heaven and earth, must have the best vocal chords of all times, past, present, and future.

My father, Peder Leithaug, is a classically trained tenor. I invited him and my mom to be my duet partners on "Fagert er landet," a Norwegian hymns CD project. He was eighty years old. Our song choice was simple. It had to be our mutual favorite, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." Dad surprised us both by being able to sing a high C in the studio. What a cherished time of worship we had! The mere thought still brings a smile to us both.

Commonly growing up I would hear Dad sing through the floor from his basement art studio while he painted. The smell of turpentine to this day brings me home to Dad, and oil paintings.

On many a day I would hear Dad hum or whistle a tune as he tirelessly worked in his garden, as he stacked rocks into walls with his bare hands,

7 I said, 'Surely you will fear Me,
You will receive instruction'—
So that her dwelling would not be
cut off,
Despite everything for which I
punished her.
But they rose early and corrupted all
their deeds.

A Faithful Remnant

8 "Therefore wait for Me," says the LORD,
"Until the day I rise up for plunder;[a]
My determination *is* to gather the
nations
To My assembly of kingdoms,
To pour on them My indignation,
All My fierce anger;
All the earth shall be devoured
With the fire of My jealousy.

9 "For then I will restore to the peoples a
pure language,
That they all may call on the name of
the LORD,
To serve Him with one accord.
10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
My worshipers,
The daughter of My dispersed ones,
Shall bring My offering.
11 In that day you shall not be shamed
for any of your deeds
In which you transgress against Me;
For then I will take away from your midst
Those who rejoice in your pride,
And you shall no longer be haughty
In My holy mountain.

3:8 [a]Septuagint and Syriac read *for witness;* Targum reads *for the day of My revelation for judgment;* Vulgate reads *for the day of My resurrection that is to come.*

or pruned his fragrant rose bushes. His voice seemed always to be several decibels louder than anyone else in our home church, and without inhibition (to my embarrassment as a preteen) he would loudly sing harmony parts to the hymns, as well as the liturgy. But for Dad, this was not for show. He was worshiping God, filled with joy over his salvation. He would rejoice in singing.

On their children's birthdays, it has been a long tradition that Dad and Mom would call us on the phone to sing "Happy Birthday" if we were not celebrating together. Today this took place again, as it happens to be my birthday. Dad is eighty-five now, and Mom, Helga, is eighty-two. Their voices were trembling but still on pitch. Sure, they were cracking a bit here and there, but they were singing! Singing over me, and rejoicing over the simple fact that I was their offspring, their very own daughter.

It brought me back to the marvelous line from Zephaniah, "The Lord is singing over you." He is rejoicing over His children, over you and me with singing.

I could not help but wonder today how many more birthdays I will have the joy of hearing this song sung by them. But regardless, I can cherish the assurance that I am also God's daughter. "Great is His faithfulness." God Himself is singing over me.

Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!
ZEPHANIAH 3:14

12 I will leave in your midst
A meek and humble people,
And they shall trust in the name of the LORD.
13 The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness
And speak no lies,
Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth;
For they shall feed *their* flocks and lie down,
And no one shall make *them* afraid."

Joy in God's Faithfulness

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all *your* heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!
15 The LORD has taken away your judgments,
He has cast out your enemy.
The King of Israel, the LORD, *is* in your midst;
You shall see[a] disaster no more.

3:15 [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Bomberg read *see;* Masoretic Text and Vulgate read *fear.*



KIM HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. | ZEPHANIAH 3:17

Music is powerfully important. Biblically, it was used for the grandest of celebrations: weddings, religious feasts, worship within the temples. The Israelites sang a song of joy after crossing the Red Sea. Did you know that God Himself utters a melodic, holy sound? Zephaniah 3:17 says, "The LORD your God in the midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."

I started singing with my father and two brothers when I was only five, and knew at least two harmony parts by age eight. By the time I was twelve, I was singing full time with my family. I had no idea how important my pastime was to become. As I grew older and closer to the Lord, the importance of music in expressing my love for this amazing Savior became more and more important to me. I could see the power of music to soften hearts and change lives. Now, singing with my husband and his family, I get to witness what simple truths coupled with memorable melodies can do. When we sing, I can picture God singing over His children, taking such pride and delight in them. I am humbled and sometimes overwhelmed that God would use my voice and the music we bring to help people understand that they are loved so much by the God of the universe that He rejoices over them with singing!

16 In that day it shall be said to
Jerusalem:
"Do not fear;
Zion, let not your hands be weak.
17 The LORD your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet *you* with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing."

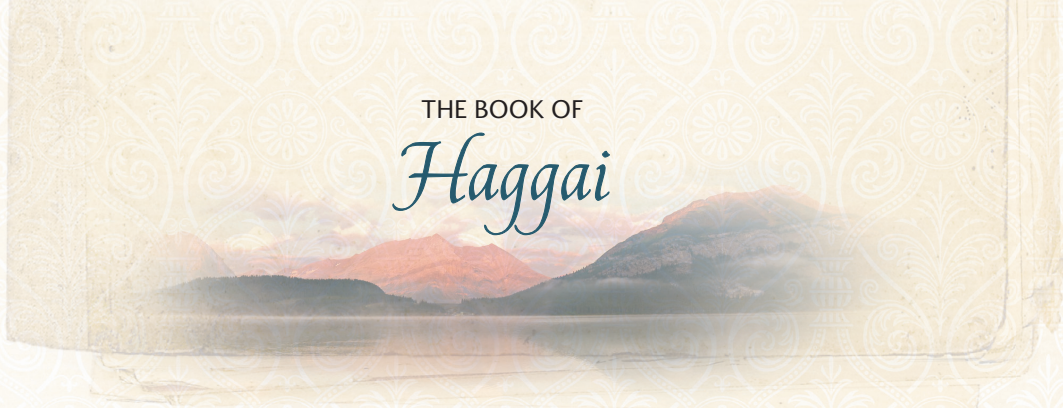
18 "I will gather those who sorrow over the
appointed assembly,
Who are among you,
To whom its reproach *is* a burden.
19 Behold, at that time
I will deal with all who afflict you;
I will save the lame,
And gather those who were driven out;
I will appoint them for praise and fame
In every land where they were put to
shame.
20 At that time I will bring you back,
Even at the time I gather you;
For I will give you fame and praise
Among all the peoples of the earth,
When I return your captives before
your eyes,"
Says the LORD.

The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.
ZEPHANIAH 3:17



THE BOOK OF

Haggai



The Command to Build God's House

1 In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, 2"Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built." '"

3Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4"*Is it* time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple[a] *to lie* in ruins?" 5Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways!

6 "You have sown much, and bring in little;
You eat, but do not have enough;
You drink, but you are not filled with drink;
You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm;
And he who earns wages,
Earns wages *to put* into a bag with holes."

7Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 8Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. 9"*You* looked for much, but indeed *it came to* little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that *is in* ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. 10Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. 11For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of *your* hands."

The People's Obedience

12Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the LORD. 13Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, "I *am* with you, says the LORD." 14So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, 15on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

The Coming Glory of God's House

2 In the seventh *month,* on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying: 2"Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: 3'Who is left among you who saw this temple[a] in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, *is this* not in your eyes as nothing? 4Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; for I *am* with you,' says the LORD of hosts. 5'*According to* the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'

6"For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once

1:4 [a]Literally *house,* and so in verse 8 **2:3** [a]Literally *house,* and so in verses 7 and 9

more (it *is* a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; [7]and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations,[a] and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. [8]'The silver *is* Mine, and the gold *is* Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. [9]'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

When God saw that many men were lazy, and gave themselves only with difficulty to spiritual reading, He wished to make it easy for them, and added the melody to the words, that all being rejoiced by the charm of the music, should sing hymns to Him with gladness.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

The People Are Defiled

[10]On the twenty-fourth *day* of the ninth *month,* in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, [11]"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests *concerning the* law, saying, [12]"If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?" '"

Then the priests answered and said, "No."

[13]And Haggai said, "If *one who is* unclean *because* of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?"

So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

[14]Then Haggai answered and said, " 'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

Promised Blessing

[15]'And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the LORD— [16]since those *days,* when *one* came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were *but* ten; when *one* came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were *but* twenty. [17]I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not *turn* to Me,' says the LORD. [18]'Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid—consider it: [19]Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded *fruit. But* from this day I will bless *you.*'"

Zerubbabel Chosen as a Signet

[20]And again the word of the LORD came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, [21]"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying:

'I will shake heaven and earth.
[22] I will overthrow the throne of
kingdoms;
I will destroy the strength of the
Gentile kingdoms.
I will overthrow the chariots
And those who ride in them;
The horses and their riders shall
come down,
Every one by the sword of his
brother.

[23]'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, 'and will make you like a signet *ring;* for I have chosen you,' says the LORD of hosts."

2:7 [a]Or *the desire of all nations*



"And I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory," says the LORD of hosts.

HAGGAI 2:7

Charles Wesley, who with his brother is considered the father of Methodism (see p. 1394), wrote thousands of hymns and included "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" in an early book of songs called *A Collection of Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord*. While the song is considered a Christmas carol, recalling the watchful expectation of Israel for her long-awaited Messiah, Wesley also seems to have written it with Christ's Second Coming in mind, including the Messiah's title "desire of every nation" from Haggai 2:7 in his lyrics. This passage is considered a prophecy of the day of the Lord, when He "will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land" (v. 6), as further described in the New Testament. In fact, the writer of Hebrews quotes this very passage when instructing believers:

> See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.
>
> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:25–29)

And so Charles Wesley teaches us through this short Christmas carol that when we celebrate Christmas, commemorating Jesus' humble first entry into the world, we must also look forward with readiness to His second, triumphal advent.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

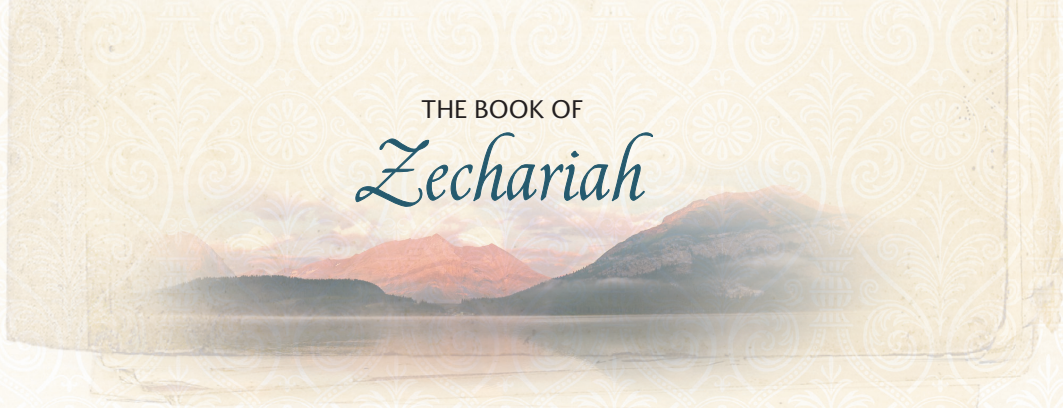
Charles Wesley | 1744

1. Come, Thou long-expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

2. Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a king,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

THE BOOK OF

Zechariah



A Call to Repentance

1 In the eighth month of the second year
of Darius, the word of the LORD came to
Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of
Iddo the prophet, saying, 2"The LORD has
been very angry with your fathers. 3Therefore
say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:
"Return to Me," says the LORD of hosts, "and
I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts.
4"Do not be like your fathers, to whom the
former prophets preached, saying, 'Thus
says the LORD of hosts: "Turn now from your
evil ways and your evil deeds." ' But they did
not hear nor heed Me," says the LORD.

5 "Your fathers, where *are* they?
And the prophets, do they live forever?
6 Yet surely My words and My statutes,
Which I commanded My servants the
prophets,
Did they not overtake your fathers?

"So they returned and said:

'Just as the LORD of hosts determined to
do to us,
According to our ways and according
to our deeds,
So He has dealt with us.'" '"

Vision of the Horses

7On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet: 8I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him *were* horses: red, sorrel, and white. 9Then I said, "My lord, what *are* these?" So the angel who talked with me said to me, "I will show you what they *are*."

10And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These *are the ones* whom the LORD has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth."

11So they answered the Angel of the LORD, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly."

The LORD Will Comfort Zion

12Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?"

13And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, *with* good *and* comforting words. 14So the angel who spoke with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"I am zealous for Jerusalem
And for Zion with great zeal.
15 I am exceedingly angry with the
nations at ease;
For I was a little angry,
And they helped—*but* with evil *intent*."

16"Therefore thus says the LORD:

"I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy;
My house shall be built in it," says the
LORD of hosts,
"And a *surveyor's* line shall be stretched
out over Jerusalem." '

17"Again proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"My cities shall again spread out
through prosperity;
The LORD will again comfort Zion,
And will again choose Jerusalem." '"

Vision of the Horns

18 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and
there *were* four horns. 19 And I said to the
angel who talked with me, "What *are* these?"

So he answered me, "These *are* the
horns that have scattered Judah, Israel,
and Jerusalem."

20 Then the LORD showed me four crafts-
men. 21 And I said, "What are these coming
to do?"

So he said, "These *are* the horns that
scattered Judah, so that no one could lift
up his head; but the craftsmen[a] are coming
to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the
nations that lifted up *their* horn against
the land of Judah to scatter it."

Vision of the Measuring Line

2 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and
behold, a man with a measuring line in
his hand. 2 So I said, "Where are you going?"

And he said to me, "To measure Jeru-
salem, to see what *is* its width and what *is*
its length."

3 And there *was* the angel who talked
with me, going out; and another angel
was coming out to meet him, 4 who said to
him, "Run, speak to this young man, say-
ing: 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns
without walls, because of the multitude
of men and livestock in it. 5 For I,' says the
LORD, 'will be a wall of fire all around her,
and I will be the glory in her midst.'"

Future Joy of Zion and Many Nations

6 "Up, up! Flee from the land of the
north," says the LORD; "for I have spread
you abroad like the four winds of heaven,"
says the LORD. 7 "Up, Zion! Escape, you who
dwell with the daughter of Babylon."

8 For thus says the LORD of hosts: "He sent
Me after glory, to the nations which plunder
you; for he who touches you touches the
apple of His eye. 9 For surely I will shake My
hand against them, and they shall become
spoil for their servants. Then you will know
that the LORD of hosts has sent Me.

10 "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion!
For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in
your midst," says the LORD. 11 "Many nations
shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and
they shall become My people. And I will
dwell in your midst. Then you will know
that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.
12 And the LORD will take possession of
Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land,
and will again choose Jerusalem. 13 Be
silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is
aroused from His holy habitation!"

> *"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion!*
> *For behold, I am coming and I will*
> *dwell in your midst," says the LORD.*
>
> ZECHARIAH 2:10

Vision of the High Priest

3 Then he showed me Joshua the high
priest standing before the Angel of the
LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand
to oppose him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan,
"The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who
has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! *Is* this
not a brand plucked from the fire?"

3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy gar-
ments, and was standing before the Angel.

4 Then He answered and spoke to those
who stood before Him, saying, "Take away
the filthy garments from him." And to him He
said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from
you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."

5 And I said, "Let them put a clean tur-
ban on his head."

So they put a clean turban on his head,
and they put the clothes on him. And the
Angel of the LORD stood by.

The Coming Branch

6 Then the Angel of the LORD admon-
ished Joshua, saying, 7 "Thus says the LORD
of hosts:

'If you will walk in My ways,
And if you will keep My command,
Then you shall also judge My house,
And likewise have charge of My courts;
I will give you places to walk
Among these who stand here.

8 'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest,
You and your companions who sit
before you,

1:21 [a]Literally *these*

For thus says the LORD of hosts:
"He sent Me after glory, to the nations
which plunder you; for he who touches
you touches the apple of His eye."
ZECHARIAH 2:8

When I was growing up, I always thought my mother had eyes in the back of her head. She seemed to be able to smell a bad attitude or a lie a mile away. But she also was always trying to catch me doing something good. We had a close and loving relationship, and although I knew better than to ever lie to her, I always knew she was my greatest advocate. She adored me, not with any sort of silly indulgence, but with a genuine pride in what she knew I could and would become. Any discipline—and there was little—was to move out of the way anything that could keep me from being the terrific kid she knew I was at heart.

I am so grateful to her. It has never been hard for me to understand that God, too, not only takes note of violations of the laws of God, He keeps track of every positive thing we've ever done and brings them up every chance He gets when we get discouraged with ourselves. "You are the apple of my eye," are the words our Father is most likely to say about and to us (Zech. 2:8). He sacrificed His own Son so that He could say it more.



For they are a wondrous sign;
For behold, I am bringing forth My
Servant the BRANCH.
9 For behold, the stone
That I have laid before Joshua:
Upon the stone *are* seven eyes.
Behold, I will engrave its inscription,'
Says the LORD of hosts,
'And I will remove the iniquity of that
land in one day.
10 In that day,' says the LORD of hosts,
'Everyone will invite his neighbor
Under his vine and under his fig tree.'"

Vision of the Lampstand and Olive Trees

4 Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. 2And he said to me, "What do you see?"

So I said, "I am looking, and there *is* a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the *stand* seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. 3Two olive trees *are* by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." 4So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What *are* these, my lord?"

5Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?"

And I said, "No, my lord."

6So he answered and said to me:

"This *is* the word of the LORD to
Zerubbabel:
'Not by might nor by power, but by My
Spirit,'
Says the LORD of hosts.
7 'Who *are* you, O great mountain?
Before Zerubbabel *you shall become* a
plain!
And he shall bring forth the capstone
With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" '"

8Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

9 "The hands of Zerubbabel
Have laid the foundation of this temple;[a]
His hands shall also finish *it*.
Then you will know
That the LORD of hosts has sent Me
to you.

4:9 [a]Literally *house*

10 For who has despised the day of small
things?
For these seven rejoice to see
The plumb line in the hand of
Zerubbabel.
They are the eyes of the LORD,
Which scan to and fro throughout the
whole earth."

11Then I answered and said to him, "What *are* these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" 12And I further answered and said to him, "What *are these* two olive branches that *drip* into the receptacles[a] of the two gold pipes from which the golden *oil* drains?"

13Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these *are?*"

And I said, "No, my lord."

14So he said, "These *are* the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."

Vision of the Flying Scroll

5 Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll.

2And he said to me, "What do you see?"

So I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length *is* twenty cubits and its width ten cubits."

3Then he said to me, "This *is* the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' according *to* this side of *the scroll;* and, 'Every perjurer shall be expelled,' according *to* that side of it."

4 "I will send out *the curse,*" says the LORD
of hosts;
"It shall enter the house of the thief
And the house of the one who swears
falsely by My name.
It shall remain in the midst of his house
And consume it, with its timber and
stones."

Vision of the Woman in a Basket

5Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and see what this *is* that goes forth."

6So I asked, "What *is* it?" And he said, "It *is* a basket[a] that is going forth."

He also said, "This *is* their resemblance throughout the earth: 7Here *is* a lead disc lifted up, and this *is* a woman sitting inside the basket"; 8then he said, "This *is* Wickedness!" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover[a] over its mouth. 9Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there *were* two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven.

10So I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?"

11And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar;[a] when it is ready, *the basket* will be set there on its base."

Vision of the Four Chariots

6 Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots *were* coming from between two mountains, and the mountains *were* mountains of bronze. 2With the first chariot *were* red horses, with the second chariot black horses, 3with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—strong *steeds.* 4Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these, my lord?"

5And the angel answered and said to me, "These *are* four spirits of heaven, who go out from *their* station before the Lord of all the earth. 6The one with the black horses is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country." 7Then the strong *steeds* went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, "Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth." So they walked to and fro throughout the earth. 8And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country."

The Command to Crown Joshua

9Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 10"Receive *the gift* from the captives—from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon—and go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. 11Take the silver and gold, make

4:12 [a]Literally *into the hands of* **5:6** [a]Hebrew *ephah,* a measuring container, and so elsewhere **5:8** [a]Literally *stone* **5:11** [a]That is, Babylon

an elaborate crown, and set *it* on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.
12 Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying:

"Behold, the Man whose name *is* the BRANCH!
From His place He shall branch out,
And He shall build the temple of the LORD;
13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD.
He shall bear the glory,
And shall sit and rule on His throne;
So He shall be a priest on His throne,
And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." '

14 "Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the LORD for Helem,[a] Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. 15 Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the LORD. Then you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And *this* shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God."

Obedience Better than Fasting

7 Now in the fourth year of King Darius it came to pass *that* the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, on the fourth *day* of the ninth month, Chisley, 2 when *the people*[a] sent Sherezer,[b] with Regem-Melech and his men, *to* the house of God,[c] to pray before the LORD, 3 *and* to ask the priests who *were* in the house of the LORD of hosts, and the prophets, saying, "Should I weep in the fifth month and fast as I have done for so many years?"

4 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 5 "Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *months* during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me—for Me? 6 When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink *for yourselves? 7 Should you* not *have obeyed* the words which the LORD proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous, and the South[a] and the Lowland were inhabited?'"

Disobedience Resulted in Captivity

8 Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, 9 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Execute true justice,
Show mercy and compassion
Everyone to his brother.
10 Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless,
The alien or the poor.
Let none of you plan evil in his heart
Against his brother.'

11 "But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. 12 Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. 13 Therefore it happened, *that* just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen," says the LORD of hosts. 14 "But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate."

Jerusalem, Holy City of the Future

8 Again the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal;
With great fervor I am zealous for her.'

3 "Thus says the LORD:

'I will return to Zion,
And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth,
The Mountain of the LORD of hosts,
The Holy Mountain.'

4 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Old men and old women shall again sit
In the streets of Jerusalem,

6:14 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Syriac reads *for Heldai* (compare verse 10); Septuagint reads *for the patient ones*.
7:2 [a]Literally *they* (compare verse 5) [b]Or *Sar-Ezer* [c]Hebrew *Bethel*
7:7 [a]Hebrew *Negev*

Each one with his staff in his hand
Because of great age.
5 The streets of the city
Shall be full of boys and girls
Playing in its streets.'

6 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'If it is marvelous in the eyes of the
remnant of this people in these days,
Will it also be marvelous in My eyes?'
Says the LORD of hosts.

7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Behold, I will save My people from the
land of the east
And from the land of the west;
8 I will bring them *back,*
And they shall dwell in the midst of
Jerusalem.
They shall be My people
And I will be their God,
In truth and righteousness.'

9 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Let your hands be strong,
You who have been hearing in these
days
These words by the mouth of the
prophets,
Who *spoke* in the day the foundation
was laid
For the house of the LORD of hosts,
That the temple might be built.
10 For before these days
There were no wages for man nor any
hire for beast;
There was no peace from the enemy for
whoever went out or came in;
For I set all men, everyone, against his
neighbor.

11 But now I *will* not *treat* the remnant of
this people as in the former days,' says the
LORD of hosts.

12 'For the seed *shall be* prosperous,
The vine shall give its fruit,
The ground shall give her increase,
And the heavens shall give their dew—
I will cause the remnant of this people
To possess all these.
13 And it shall come to pass
That just as you were a curse among
the nations,
O house of Judah and house of Israel,
So I will save you, and you shall be a
blessing.
Do not fear,
Let your hands be strong.'

14 "For thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Just as I determined to punish you
When your fathers provoked Me to
wrath,'
Says the LORD of hosts,
'And I would not relent,
15 So again in these days
I am determined to do good
To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.
Do not fear.
16 These *are* the things you shall do:
Speak each man the truth to his
neighbor;
Give judgment in your gates for truth,
justice, and peace;
17 Let none of you think evil in your[a]
heart against your neighbor;
And do not love a false oath.
For all these *are things* that I hate,'
Says the LORD."

18 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came
to me, saying, 19 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'The fast of the fourth *month,*
The fast of the fifth,
The fast of the seventh,
And the fast of the tenth,
Shall be joy and gladness and
cheerful feasts
For the house of Judah.
Therefore love truth and peace.'

20 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Peoples shall yet come,
Inhabitants of many cities;
21 The inhabitants of one *city* shall go to
another, saying,
"Let us continue to go and pray before
the LORD,
And seek the LORD of hosts.
I myself will go also."

8:17 [a]Literally *his*

22 Yes, many peoples and strong nations
Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in
Jerusalem,
And to pray before the LORD.'

23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard *that* God *is* with you." '"

Israel Defended Against Enemies

9 The burden[a] of the word of the LORD
Against the land of Hadrach,
And Damascus its resting place
(For the eyes of men
And all the tribes of Israel
Are on the LORD);
2 Also *against* Hamath, *which* borders on it,
And *against* Tyre and Sidon, though
they are very wise.

3 For Tyre built herself a tower,
Heaped up silver like the dust,
And gold like the mire of the streets.
4 Behold, the Lord will cast her out;
He will destroy her power in the sea,
And she will be devoured by fire.

5 Ashkelon shall see *it* and fear;
Gaza also shall be very sorrowful;
And Ekron, for He dried up her
expectation.
The king shall perish from Gaza,
And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

6 "A mixed race shall settle in Ashdod,
And I will cut off the pride of the
Philistines.
7 I will take away the blood from his
mouth,
And the abominations from between
his teeth.
But he who remains, even he *shall be*
for our God,
And shall be like a leader in Judah,
And Ekron like a Jebusite.
8 I will camp around My house
Because of the army,
Because of him who passes by and him
who returns.
No more shall an oppressor pass
through them,
For now I have seen with My eyes.

The Coming King

9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He *is* just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.
10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
And the horse from Jerusalem;
The battle bow shall be cut off.
He shall speak peace to the nations;
His dominion *shall be* 'from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the
earth.'[a]

God Will Save His People

11 "As for you also,
Because of the blood of your covenant,
I will set your prisoners free from the
waterless pit.
12 Return to the stronghold,
You prisoners of hope.
Even today I declare
That I will restore double to you.
13 For I have bent Judah, My *bow,*
Fitted the bow with Ephraim,
And raised up your sons, O Zion,
Against your sons, O Greece,
And made you like the sword of a
mighty man."

14 Then the LORD will be seen over them,
And His arrow will go forth like
lightning.
The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet,
And go with whirlwinds from the south.
15 The LORD of hosts will defend them;
They shall devour and subdue with
slingstones.
They shall drink *and* roar as if with
wine;
They shall be filled *with blood* like
basins,
Like the corners of the altar.
16 The LORD their God will save them in
that day,
As the flock of His people.
For they *shall be like* the jewels of a crown,
Lifted like a banner over His land—
17 For how great is its[a] goodness
And how great its[b] beauty!

9:1 [a]Or *oracle* **9:10** [a]Psalm 72:8 **9:17** [a]Or *His* [b]Or *His*

Grain shall make the young men thrive,
And new wine the young women.

Restoration of Judah and Israel

10 Ask the LORD for rain
In the time of the latter rain.[a]
The LORD will make flashing clouds;
He will give them showers of rain,
Grass in the field for everyone.

2 For the idols[a] speak delusion;
The diviners envision lies,
And tell false dreams;
They comfort in vain.
Therefore *the people* wend their way
like sheep;
They are in trouble because *there is* no
shepherd.

3 "My anger is kindled against the
shepherds,
And I will punish the goatherds.
For the LORD of hosts will visit His flock,
The house of Judah,
And will make them as His royal horse
in the battle.
4 From him comes the cornerstone,
From him the tent peg,
From him the battle bow,
From him every ruler[a] together.
5 They shall be like mighty men,
Who tread down *their enemies*
In the mire of the streets in the battle.
They shall fight because the LORD is
with them,
And the riders on horses shall be put
to shame.

6 "I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And I will save the house of Joseph.
I will bring them back,
Because I have mercy on them.
They shall be as though I had not cast
them aside;
For I *am* the LORD their God,
And I will hear them.
7 *Those of* Ephraim shall be like a mighty
man,
And their heart shall rejoice as if
with wine.
Yes, their children shall see *it* and
be glad;
Their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.
8 I will whistle for them and gather them,
For I will redeem them;
And they shall increase as they once
increased.

9 "I will sow them among the peoples,
And they shall remember Me in far
countries;
They shall live, together with their
children,
And they shall return.
10 I will also bring them back from the
land of Egypt,
And gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them into the land of
Gilead and Lebanon,
Until no *more room* is found for them.
11 He shall pass through the sea with
affliction,
And strike the waves of the sea:
All the depths of the River[a] shall dry up.
Then the pride of Assyria shall be
brought down,
And the scepter of Egypt shall depart.

12 "So I will strengthen them in the LORD,
And they shall walk up and down in
His name,"
Says the LORD.

Desolation of Israel

11 Open your doors, O Lebanon,
That fire may devour your cedars.
2 Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,
Because the mighty *trees* are ruined.
Wail, O oaks of Bashan,
For the thick forest has come down.
3 *There is* the sound of wailing shepherds!
For their glory is in ruins.
There is the sound of roaring lions!
For the pride[a] of the Jordan is in ruins.

Prophecy of the Shepherds

4 Thus says the LORD my God, "Feed the
flock for slaughter, 5 whose owners slaugh-
ter them and feel no guilt; those who sell
them say, 'Blessed be the LORD, for I am
rich'; and their shepherds do not pity them.
6 For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of
the land," says the LORD. "But indeed I will
give everyone into his neighbor's hand and

10:1 [a]That is, spring rain **10:2** [a]Hebrew *teraphim* **10:4** [a]Or *despot*
10:11 [a]That is, the Nile **11:3** [a]Or *floodplain, thicket*

Gospel Songs

In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

ZECHARIAH 13:1

SAMUEL TAYLOR Coleridge once called William Cowper "the best modern poet," and like nearly all poets, Cowper had a deep and complex inner well from which to draw inspiration. Having lost his mother when he was only six and then bullied at boarding school, Cowper developed a fragile disposition, prone to bouts of severe depression and anxiety. He found refuge in poetry and writing, though, and so became all the more anxious when his father pressured him to pursue law. When that didn't work out, Cowper attempted, but failed, to kill himself. As a result, he landed in an insane asylum run by Nathaniel Cotton, a fellow poet and a committed follower of Christ. Receiving treatment from a kindred spirit worked wonders for Cowper, but what changed him forever was meeting Jesus Christ. His relationship with Christ would sustain him through his lifelong struggle with mental illness and personal setbacks.

Upon Cowper's release from the asylum, he was invited to live with Morley and Mary Unwin, whom he met at church, and he moved with them to Olney, England. Soon after the move, Morley died in a riding accident, but Mary continued to care for Cowper, allowing him to stay in her home. In Olney, Cowper developed a friendship with John Newton, who took him under his wing, encouraging him in his writing and even inviting him to help with a major project he was undertaking, *The Olney Hymns* (see p. xxx). In fact, in the preface, Newton states that in addition to his desire for "promoting the faith and comfort of sincere christians [*sic*]," the *Hymns* were also "intended as a monument, to perpetuate the remembrance of an intimate and endeared friendship," referring to Cowper.

The Olney Hymns contained 348 songs in its original publication, and Cowper is credited with writing sixty-seven of them, including "O for a Closer Walk with God," "God Moves in a Mysterious Way," and "There Is a Fountain." Cowper would go on to struggle for the rest of his life with intense anxiety, plagued with the erroneous belief that he was bound for hell. But during those dark times, he was sustained with the truth that "In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). Cowper's sins *were* forgiven, no matter how much his fears plagued him or his heart or his mind deceived him. Because after all, faith is not a feeling; it's a choice we make to take God at His Word. And God's Word is truer than anything we think or feel. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). *Thank you, Jesus, thank you!*

There Is a Fountain

William Cowper, 1772

1. There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

2. The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in His day;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.

3. Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are safe, to sin no more.

4. E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

5. When this poor, lisping, stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy pow'r to save.

into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land, and I will not deliver *them* from their hand."

7So I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock.[a] I took for myself two staffs: the one I called Beauty,[b] and the other I called Bonds;[c] and I fed the flock. 8I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. 9Then I said, "I will not feed you. Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other's flesh." 10And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. 11So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor[a] of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it *was* the word of the LORD. 12Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give *me* my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty *pieces* of silver.

13And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty *pieces* of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. 14Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

15And the LORD said to me, "Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. 16For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land *who* will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces.

17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd,
Who leaves the flock!
A sword *shall be* against his arm
And against his right eye;
His arm shall completely wither,
And his right eye shall be totally
blinded."

The Coming Deliverance of Judah

12 The burden[a] of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: 2"Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. 4In that day," says the LORD, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. 5And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem *are* my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.' 6In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.

7"The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. 8In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. 9It shall be in that day *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Mourning for the Pierced One

10"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son,* and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. 11In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.[a] 12And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; 13the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; 14all the

11:7 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *for the Canaanites.* [b]Or *Grace,* and so in verse 10 [c]Or *Unity,* and so in verse 14
11:11 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the Canaanites.* **12:1** [a]Or *oracle* **12:11** [a]Hebrew *Megiddon*

families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

Idolatry Cut Off

13 "In that day a fountain shall be
opened for the house of David and
for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin
and for uncleanness.
2 "It shall be in that day," says the LORD
of hosts, "*that* I will cut off the names of the
idols from the land, and they shall no lon-
ger be remembered. I will also cause the
prophets and the unclean spirit to depart
from the land. 3 It shall come to pass *that*
if anyone still prophesies, then his father
and mother who begot him will say to him,
'You shall not live, because you have spo-
ken lies in the name of the LORD.' And his
father and mother who begot him shall
thrust him through when he prophesies.
4 "And it shall be in that day *that* every
prophet will be ashamed of his vision when
he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of
coarse hair to deceive. 5 But he will say, 'I
am no prophet, I *am* a farmer; for a man
taught me to keep cattle from my youth.'
6 And *one* will say to him, 'What are these
wounds between your arms?'[a] Then he will
answer, '*Those* with which I was wounded
in the house of my friends.'

The Shepherd Savior

7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
Against the Man who is My
Companion,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"Strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep will be scattered;
Then I will turn My hand against the
little ones.
8 And it shall come to pass in all the
land,"
Says the LORD,
"*That* two-thirds in it shall be cut off
and die,
But *one*-third shall be left in it:
9 I will bring the *one*-third through
the fire,
Will refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them.
I will say, 'This *is* My people';
And each one will say, 'The LORD *is* my
God.'"

The Day of the LORD

14 Behold, the day of the LORD is
coming,
And your spoil will be divided in your
midst.
2 For I will gather all the nations to
battle against Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken,
The houses rifled,
And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity,
But the remnant of the people shall
not be cut off from the city.

3 Then the LORD will go forth
And fight against those nations,
As He fights in the day of battle.
4 And in that day His feet will stand on
the Mount of Olives,
Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split
in two,
From east to west,
Making a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move
toward the north
And half of it toward the south.

5 Then you shall flee *through* My
mountain valley,
For the mountain valley shall reach
to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee
As you fled from the earthquake
In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.

Thus the LORD my God will come,
And all the saints with You.[a]

6 It shall come to pass in that day
That there will be no light;
The lights will diminish.
7 It shall be one day
Which is known to the LORD—
Neither day nor night.
But at evening time it shall happen
That it will be light.

8 And in that day it shall be
That living waters shall flow from
Jerusalem,

13:6 [a]Or *hands* **14:5** [a]Or *you;* Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *Him.*

Half of them toward the eastern sea
And half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.
9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth.
In that day it shall be—
"The LORD *is* one,"[a]
And His name one.

10 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. *Jerusalem*[a] shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and *from* the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses.

11 *The people* shall dwell in it;
And no longer shall there be utter destruction,
But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

12 And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem:

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet,
Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,
And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

13 It shall come to pass in that day
That a great panic from the LORD will be among them.
Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor,
And raise his hand against his neighbor's hand;
14 Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.
And the wealth of all the surrounding nations
Shall be gathered together:
Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.

15 Such also shall be the plague
On the horse *and* the mule,
On the camel and the donkey,
And on all the cattle that will be in those camps.
So *shall* this plague *be.*

The Nations Worship the King

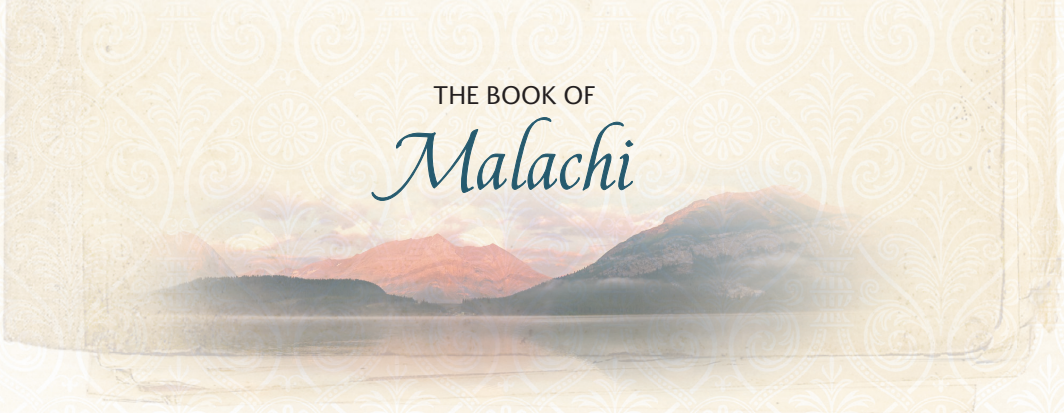
16 And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they *shall have* no *rain;* they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

20 In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be *engraved* on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 21 Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts.[a] Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

14:9 [a]Compare Deuteronomy 6:4 **14:10** [a]Literally *She* **14:21** [a]Or *on every pot . . . shall be (engraved) "HOLINESS TO THE LORD OF HOSTS"*

THE BOOK OF

Malachi



1 The burden[a] of the word of the LORD to
Israel by Malachi.

Israel Beloved of God

2 "I have loved you," says the LORD.
"Yet you say, 'In what way have You
loved us?'
Was not Esau Jacob's brother?"
Says the LORD.
"Yet Jacob I have loved;
3 But Esau I have hated,
And laid waste his mountains and his
heritage
For the jackals of the wilderness."

4 Even though Edom has said,
"We have been impoverished,
But we will return and build the
desolate places,"

Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"They may build, but I will throw down;
They shall be called the Territory of
Wickedness,
And the people against whom the LORD
will have indignation forever.
5 Your eyes shall see,
And you shall say,
'The LORD is magnified beyond the
border of Israel.'

Polluted Offerings

6 "A son honors *his* father,
And a servant *his* master.
If then I am the Father,
Where *is* My honor?
And if I *am* a Master,
Where *is* My reverence?
Says the LORD of hosts
To you priests who despise My name.
Yet you say, 'In what way have we
despised Your name?'
7 "You offer defiled food on My altar,
But say,
'In what way have we defiled You?'
By saying,
'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'
8 And when you offer the blind as a
sacrifice,
Is it not evil?
And when you offer the lame and sick,
Is it not evil?
Offer it then to your governor!
Would he be pleased with you?
Would he accept you favorably?"
Says the LORD of hosts.

9 "But now entreat God's favor,
That He may be gracious to us.
While this is being *done* by your hands,
Will He accept you favorably?"
Says the LORD of hosts.
10 "Who *is there* even among you who
would shut the doors,
So that you would not kindle fire *on*
My altar in vain?
I have no pleasure in you,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"Nor will I accept an offering from your
hands.
11 For from the rising of the sun, even to
its going down,
My name *shall be* great among the
Gentiles;
In every place incense *shall be* offered
to My name,
And a pure offering;
For My name shall be great among the
nations,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

12 "But you profane it,
In that you say,
'The table of the LORD[a] is defiled;

1:1 [a]Or *oracle* **1:12** [a]Following Bomberg; Masoretic Text reads *Lord.*

And its fruit, its food, *is* contemptible.'
13 You also say,
'Oh, what a weariness!'
And you sneer at it,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"And you bring the stolen, the lame,
and the sick;
Thus you bring an offering!
Should I accept this from your hand?"
Says the LORD.
14 "But cursed *be* the deceiver
Who has in his flock a male,
And takes a vow,
But sacrifices to the Lord what is
blemished—
For I *am* a great King,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"And My name *is to be* feared among
the nations.

Corrupt Priests

2 "And now, O priests, this
commandment is for you.
2 If you will not hear,
And if you will not take *it* to heart,
To give glory to My name,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"I will send a curse upon you,
And I will curse your blessings.
Yes, I have cursed them already,
Because you do not take *it* to heart.



DONY McGUIRE • Homecoming Artist, Songwriter, Music Minister, Married to Reba Rambo-McGuire

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," says the LORD of hosts. | MALACHI 3:8–11

In February of 1997, Reba and I were in the midst of a series of revival meetings that ran for twenty-two weeks. Because the services themselves had drained us of a lot of physical energy, a family in the church blessed us with a couple days at a dude ranch not far from Tucson, Arizona. (That's a story for another time.)

After a wonderful evening meal and a relaxing hot bath, Reebs and I crawled into bed for what would hopefully be a long night of sleep. Much to my dismay, sleep never came. In fact, the only thing that came that evening was a weight that felt more like an elephant sitting on my chest.

I wrestled with the discomfort a couple hours then surrendered to the need to call a doctor friend and tell him what I was experiencing. He advised that I go straight to the hospital, do not pass "Go," and don't even think about collecting $200. This is where the story gets really good.

3 "Behold, I will rebuke your descendants
And spread refuse on your faces,
The refuse of your solemn feasts;
And *one* will take you away with it.
4 Then you shall know that I have sent
this commandment to you,
That My covenant with Levi may
continue,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
5 "My covenant was with him, *one* of life
and peace,
And I gave them to him *that he might*
fear *Me*;
So he feared Me
And was reverent before My name.
6 The law of truth[a] was in his mouth,
And injustice was not found on his lips.
He walked with Me in peace and equity,
And turned many away from iniquity.
7 "For the lips of a priest should keep
knowledge,
And *people* should seek the law from
his mouth;
For he is the messenger of the LORD of
hosts.
8 But you have departed from the way;
You have caused many to stumble at
the law.

2:6 [a]Or *true instruction*

Reba doesn't like to drive, especially at night. Reba really doesn't like driving on dirt roads. Reba is beautiful and sweet, but a good driver she is not. Having more than thirty miles of dirt roads to navigate at 2:00 A.M. is a challenge for the best of drivers, but to Reebs? So, you can only imagine how my prayer life was intensified on this cool February evening, now turned to morning, as we headed toward a hospital in the little town of Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Once I checked in, it was one test after another until a doctor came in and said, "Mr. McGuire, you're having quite a heart attack!" I lay there for a couple minutes and then it came to me: "I'm a tither!"

God said that He would rebuke the devourer for my sake—"I'm a tither!"

Reba came into the emergency room where I was located, quite shaken, and I looked up at her and said, "Baby, I'm going to be all right—I'm a tither!"

The more I said it, the more convinced I became that the benefits of serving God by bringing to Him the first and best of my increase were mine to claim.

To make a very long story not quite as long, I did have a heart attack. There were a couple of blockages that had caused the blood flow to be lessened that needed to be stinted. But the beauty was there was no damage to the heart that could be detected, and three days later I was released. Within a week, I was back teaching and singing as if nothing had ever happened. I'm convinced the reason that moment was not a bigger event than it was is directly connected to my understanding of this passage in Malachi 3. God rebuked the devourer for my sake!

But who can endure the day of His coming?
And who can stand when He appears?
For He is like a refiner's fire and
like launderers' soap. . .
He will purify the sons of Levi,
and purge them as gold and silver,
that they may offer to the LORD
an offering in righteousness.
MALACHI 3:2, 3

So we want to be praise and worship leaders? Well, there must be a meltdown first, of pride, of phony professions, of arrogance, and a refining of the soul of us until all the stuff of life—attitudes, possessions, habits, lifestyle—proclaims the glory of the Lord. The scripture from the prophet Malachi goes on to say: "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD . . . as in former years" (v. 4).

Because of God's distillation, we who lead worshipers to the throne will, because of tribulation, be full of hope and character and perseverance and most of all, full of love that has been poured out by the Holy Spirit. By then, we and the whole congregation will have something to praise about, and pure, true praise is always a result of a dynamic history with God.



You have corrupted the covenant of
Levi,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
9 "Therefore I also have made you
contemptible and base
Before all the people,
Because you have not kept My ways
But have shown partiality in the law."

Treachery of Infidelity

10 Have we not all one Father?
Has not one God created us?
Why do we deal treacherously with
one another
By profaning the covenant of the
fathers?
11 Judah has dealt treacherously,
And an abomination has been
committed in Israel and in
Jerusalem,
For Judah has profaned
The LORD's holy *institution* which He
loves:
He has married the daughter of a
foreign god.
12 May the LORD cut off from the tents of
Jacob
The man who does this, being awake
and aware,[a]
Yet who brings an offering to the LORD
of hosts!

13 And this is the second thing you do:
You cover the altar of the LORD with
tears,
With weeping and crying;
So He does not regard the offering
anymore,
Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your
hands.
14 Yet you say, "For what reason?"
Because the LORD has been witness
Between you and the wife of your
youth,
With whom you have dealt
treacherously;
Yet she is your companion
And your wife by covenant.
15 But did He not make *them* one,
Having a remnant of the Spirit?
And why one?
He seeks godly offspring.

2:12 [a]Talmud and Vulgate read *teacher and student.*

Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And let none deal treacherously with
the wife of his youth.

16 "For the LORD God of Israel says
That He hates divorce,
For it covers one's garment with
violence,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"Therefore take heed to your spirit,
That you do not deal treacherously."

17 You have wearied the LORD with
your words;
Yet you say,
"In what way have we wearied *Him?*"
In that you say,
"Everyone who does evil
Is good in the sight of the LORD,
And He delights in them,"
Or, "Where *is* the God of justice?"

The Coming Messenger

3 "Behold, I send My messenger,
And he will prepare the way before
Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

2 "But who can endure the day of His
coming?
And who can stand when He appears?
For He *is* like a refiner's fire
And like launderers' soap.
3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of
silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And purge them as gold and silver,
That they may offer to the LORD
An offering in righteousness.

4 "Then the offering of Judah and
Jerusalem
Will be pleasant to the LORD,
As in the days of old,
As in former years.
5 And I will come near you for judgment;
I will be a swift witness
Against sorcerers,
Against adulterers,
Against perjurers,
Against those who exploit wage
earners and widows and orphans,
And against those who turn away
an alien—
Because they do not fear Me,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

6 "For I *am* the LORD, I do not change;
Therefore you are not consumed,
O sons of Jacob.
7 Yet from the days of your fathers
You have gone away from My
ordinances
And have not kept *them*.
Return to Me, and I will return
to you,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"But you said,
'In what way shall we return?'

Do Not Rob God

8 "Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!
But you say,
'In what way have we robbed You?'
In tithes and offerings.
9 You are cursed with a curse,
For you have robbed Me,
Even this whole nation.
10 Bring all the tithes into the
storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows
of heaven
And pour out for you *such* blessing
That *there will* not *be room* enough *to
receive it*.

11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for
your sakes,
So that he will not destroy the fruit of
your ground,
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for
you in the field,"
Says the LORD of hosts;
12 "And all nations will call you blessed,
For you will be a delightful land,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

The People Complain Harshly

13 "Your words have been harsh against Me,"
Says the LORD,
"Yet you say,
'What have we spoken against You?'
14 You have said,
'It is useless to serve God;
What profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance,
And that we have walked as mourners
Before the LORD of hosts?
15 So now we call the proud blessed,
For those who do wickedness are raised up;
They even tempt God and go free.'"

A Book of Remembrance

16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another,
And the LORD listened and heard *them*;
So a book of remembrance was written before Him
For those who fear the LORD
And who meditate on His name.

17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts,
"On the day that I make them My jewels.[a]
And I will spare them
As a man spares his own son who serves him."
18 Then you shall again discern
Between the righteous and the wicked,
Between one who serves God
And one who does not serve Him.

The Great Day of God

4 "For behold, the day is coming,
Burning like an oven,
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"That will leave them neither root nor branch.
2 But to you who fear My name
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise
With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.
3 You shall trample the wicked,
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet
On the day that I do *this*,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

4 "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.
5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.
6 And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

3:17 [a]Literally *special treasure*



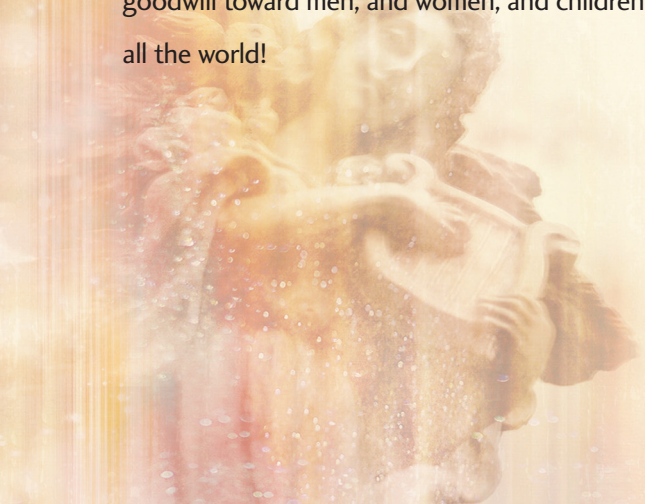
The NEW TESTAMENT

MUSIC: AN EXPRESSION OF *Praise*

When God shows up, we can do nothing but fall down in praise and adoration. That's what happened the very first time God made an appearance on this earth in human form. It's what will always happen whenever we find ourselves in the presence of the living Christ! All discussions of the *hows* and *whats* of worship styles, or worship aids and devices, will fall silent in the presence of the Holy One.

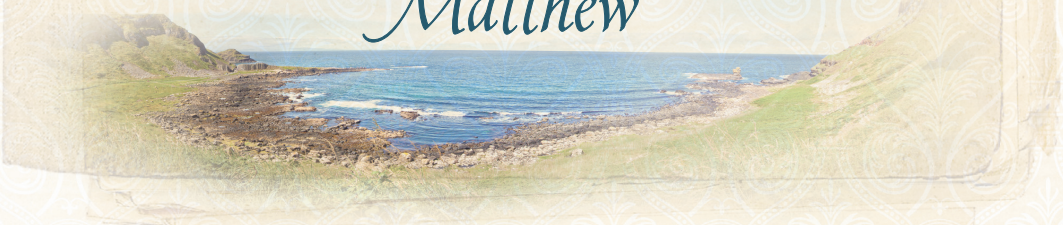
When God is present we will at first stand in awe, fall down in wonder, or bow low in repentance; then, finding our voices, we will sing, shout, weep, dance, beat drums, play instruments, clap hands, make banners, march around the altar (or the manger or the stable or the living room). Indeed, we will not be able to find enough ways to express our praise. We will not argue about old songs or new songs, hymnals or screens, choir robes or worship teams in blue jeans, pipe organs or guitars. We only argue about such things before God shows up or a very long time after He's gone away.

But when He comes, when God Himself is born among us, we may have to shut up entirely and let the angels sing. One thing for sure, there will not be dissension and fussing and dividing of services or churches. No, there will be peace on earth, goodwill toward men, and women, and children, and neighbors, and strangers, and all the world!



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

Matthew



The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ,
the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:
[2]Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob,
and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.
[3]Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar,
Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot
Ram. [4]Ram begot Amminadab, Ammina-
dab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot
Salmon. [5]Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab,
Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot
Jesse, [6]and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife*[a] of Uriah. [7]Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa.[a] [8]Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. [9]Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. [10]Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon,[a] and Amon begot Josiah. [11]Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

[12]And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. [13]Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. [14]Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. [15]Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. [16]And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

[17]So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations.

Christ Born of Mary

[18]Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. [19]Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man,* and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. [20]But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. [21]And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

[22]So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: [23]*"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,"*[a] which is translated, "God with us."

[24]Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, [25]and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son.[a] And he called His name Jesus.

Wise Men from the East

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem
of Judea in the days of Herod the king,
behold, wise men from the East came to
Jerusalem, [2]saying, "Where is He who has
been born King of the Jews? For we have
seen His star in the East and have come to
worship Him."

[3]When Herod the king heard *this,* he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. [4]And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

1:6 [a]Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Greek. **1:7** [a]NU-Text reads *Asaph.* **1:10** [a]NU-Text reads *Amos.* **1:23** [a]Isaiah 7:14. Words in oblique type in the New Testament are quoted from the Old Testament. **1:25** [a]NU-Text reads *a Son.*

5So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

6 *'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,*
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"[a]

7Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him,* bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

9When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

12Then, being divinely warned in a dream

2:6 [a]Micah 5:2



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus. | MATTHEW 1:24, 25

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt. | MATTHEW 2:14

At Christmastime we do a lot of thinking and talking about the Baby and the mother, as we should, for the Baby was the first earthly glimpse man had ever had of his Creator.

Mary deserves our respect as the one God trusted enough to let her care for such a One as He! But Joseph always gets the short end of the stick in all the Christmas stories. He played his part so well that he is taken for granted.

He accepted an embarrassing situation, for his betrothed was pregnant. He accepted it with good grace and had the faith to believe that this truly was of God. He immediately assumed the role of protector and gave up his rights as a husband. He treated Mary with respect and gentleness in an age when men treated women as one of their possessions. He set a whole new pattern and standard for men to follow. He may have been the very first gentleman as we know the term.

So, Joseph, thank you for living your life so nearly perfect that we forget you. Thank you for the perfect example of what a Christian gentleman can be.

that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

The Flight into Egypt

13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, *"Out of Egypt I called My Son."*[a]

Massacre of the Innocents

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

18 *"A voice was heard in Ramah,*
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted,
Because they are no more."[a]

The Home in Nazareth

19 Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." 21 Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make His paths straight.'"[a]

4 Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him 6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.[a] 12 His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

John Baptizes Jesus

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14 And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

2:15 [a]Hosea 11:1 **2:18** [a]Jeremiah 31:15 **3:3** [a]Isaiah 40:3
3:11 [a]M-Text omits *and fire.*

16 When He had been baptized, Jesus
came up immediately from the water; and
behold, the heavens were opened to Him,
and He[a] saw the Spirit of God descending
like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And
suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying,
"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well
pleased."

Satan Tempts Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into
the wilderness to be tempted by the
devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days
and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.
3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he
said, "If You are the Son of God, command
that these stones become bread."
4 But He answered and said, "It is writ-
ten, *'Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceeds from the
mouth of God.'*"[a]

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy
city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,
6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God,
throw Yourself down. For it is written:

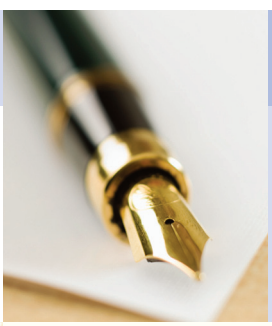
*'He shall give His angels charge
over you,'*

and,

*'In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a
stone.'*"[a]

7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again,
'You shall not tempt the LORD *your God.'*"[a]
8 Again, the devil took Him up on an
exceedingly high mountain, and showed
Him all the kingdoms of the world and

3:16 [a]Or *he* **4:4** [a]Deuteronomy 8:3 **4:6** [a]Psalm 91:11, 12
4:7 [a]Deuteronomy 6:16



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. | MATTHEW 3:16

Often when we think of the dove, we think of the dove of peace. Perhaps that is because Noah's dove returned with a freshly picked olive leaf in her beak. There is another picture of the dove in the Bible. The dove was the sacrifice of the poor worshiper who could not afford to bring a lamb. There was even a provision made for those who could not afford to bring a dove. The poverty stricken were allowed to bring a pinch of flour as a substitute for the dove. I am sure God was saying, "Let no one stay away! Come to Me!" When I considered the dove as a sacrifice for sin, I wondered if God sent the dove to light upon Him as an anointing for His mission.
It was certainly instructive to see our perfect Lord Jesus standing in the waters of the Jordan identifying with sinners. If a lamb or a cross descended on Him, we would have no trouble understanding the symbolism. I think the Lord Jesus was being anointed for His great commission. The visible symbol of the poor man's sacrifice certainly became the dove of peace, but at first it was the dove of death.

Back from Bethlehem

GLORIA GAITHER

On our way back from Bethlehem
We could have been waylaid by
Herods
Or stopped down by cynics
Who'd say stars are voodoo
And shepherds are ignorant
And there is no breeding
In small towns like Nazareth.

We could have avoided
The tales and the rumors
That swarmed through the travelers—
After all, they were Jewish
And we were all scholars
And could have discounted
Parochial legends.

But warnings weren't rumors
And angels aren't legends
The baby was real as real can be
And sometimes you just can't
Let simplicity throw you—
Greatness and riches aren't
Always the same.

So we trusted the warning
And went by our instincts,
Turned west and not east, then
Circled around—avoided an ambush,
We later discovered
And went home rejoicing
At what we had found.

their glory. 9And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

10Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you,[a] Satan! For it is written, *'You shall worship the* LORD *your God, and Him only you shall serve.'*"[b]

11Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry

12Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. 13And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

15 *"The land of Zebulun and the land of*
Naphtali,
By the way of the sea, beyond the
Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles:
16 *The people who sat in darkness have*
seen a great light,
And upon those who sat in the region
and shadow of death
Light has dawned."[a]

17From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Four Fishermen Called as Disciples

18And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

21Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, 22and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

4:10 [a]M-Text reads *Get behind Me.* [b]Deuteronomy 6:13
4:16 [a]Isaiah 9:1, 2



BILL GAITHER

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. | MATTHEW 5:5

I recently went to the funeral home with a friend of mine for the visitation of our schoolmate, Lloyd Frix, who had passed away. Lloyd came from a hardworking family in our little town of Alexandria, Indiana. He was one of the strongest young men I had ever known, I suppose, because he had helped his father with the family's moving business all his life, which involved a lot of heavy lifting.

Lloyd also played high school football and he was amazing. If the team was at third down and short, everyone knew to get the ball to Lloyd. He could get the first down every time.

In talking to my friend after the visitation, we reflected on Lloyd's strength, but soon found ourselves discussing his gentleness. He was one of the kindest, gentlest people either one of us had ever met. I asked my friend, "Did you ever know Lloyd to use his physical strength other than on the football field?"



Jesus Heals a Great Multitude

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. 24 Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. 25 Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

The Beatitudes

5 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed *are* those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
5 Blessed *are* the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.
6 Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.
7 Blessed *are* the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.
8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.
9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.
10 Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Believers Are Salt and Light

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

My friend, who had attended Ball State University with Lloyd, at first said, "Never." Then, upon further reflection added, "Well, once."

He went on to recall one night at Ball State when three thugs were making fun of a girl for her size. They were all friends with Lloyd, but after they started insulting this young lady, Lloyd stood up to face each one of those young men and warned them, "I could either do this in here, or outside . . . and I can take all of you at once or each of you individually, but you are not going to treat her like that." Apparently those young men knew he meant business. And they all walked away.

After hearing that story about this gentle giant of a friend, I understood Matthew 5:5 for the first time in my life. Meekness isn't weakness. It is strength under control—and not only physical strength. Any advantage—whether a mental advantage, the ability to articulate, or even our station in life—that is used to intimidate or dominate another human being for our own gain is a misuse of power. God is not honored by a lack of meekness.

Meekness means using our strengths humbly and responsibly, as Jesus would. He promises that the meek, in the end, will inherit the earth.

It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

14"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. 16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Christ Fulfills the Law

17"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them,* he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder Begins in the Heart

21"You have heard that it was said to those of old, *'You shall not murder,*[a] and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause[a] shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. 23Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

Adultery in the Heart

27"You have heard that it was said to those of old,[a] *'You shall not commit*

5:21 [a]Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17 **5:22** [a]NU-Text omits *without a cause.* **5:27** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to those of old.*



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. | MATTHEW 5:14

After a concert, a friend shared with me that she had become very discouraged with where her family of four is presently living. The once pleasant section in the northern city they call home has over the years become unsafe and undesirable for parents rearing small boys. She expressed their desire to move but could not find a home with preferred surroundings that would fit into their budget.

The family who lived across the street from them purchased a different home and moved away. One evening that family came back to the neighborhood to visit my friend. They expressed to her simply, "We want you to know that watching the lives of you, your husband, and family over these

adultery.[b] [28]But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [29]If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. [30]And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Marriage Is Sacred and Binding

[31]"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' [32]But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality[a] causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Jesus Forbids Oaths

[33]"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' [34]But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; [35]nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. [36]Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. [37]But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Go the Second Mile

[38]"You have heard that it was said, *'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'*[a] [39]But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. [40]If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. [41]And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. [42]Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Love Your Enemies

[43]"You have heard that it was said, *'You shall love your neighbor*[a] and hate your enemy.' [44]But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those

5:27 [b]Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18 **5:32** [a]Or *fornication*
5:38 [a]Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21
5:43 [a]Compare Leviticus 19:18

past years that we lived across from you made a great impression on us and today we're in church serving Christ."

My friend said, "At times we've been a little afraid there, but God sure encouraged us through those folks, and seemed to say, 'It's all right. You have served me right here where you are.'"

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Light functions in virtue of what it is. Our light is not our good deeds, but the means by which people see that they are good. This verse stresses character rather than works. My friend possibly had not had that much verbal contact with the neighbors across the street, but the light shining on her and her family had evidently become a beacon that reached others.

Where are you in your life right now? Do you have the light of the Word residing in you? You don't have to change jobs or locations to be a beacon for the Lord.

who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,[a] 45that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47And if you greet your brethren[a] only, what do you do more *than others?* Do not even the tax collectors[b] do so? 48Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Do Good to Please God

6 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.[a]

The Model Prayer

5"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place;* and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.[a] 7And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the

5:44 [a]NU-Text omits three clauses from this verse, leaving, *"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."* **5:47** [a]M-Text reads *friends.* [b]NU-Text reads *Gentiles.* **6:4** [a]NU-Text omits *openly.* **6:6** [a]NU-Text omits *openly.*



LOU WILLS HILDRETH • Homecoming Artist, Journalist, Formerly with *The Wills Family*

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. | MATTHEW 5:16

These are the words of Jesus' teaching His disciples on the mountain, often referred to as the Beatitudes or Sermon on the Mount. This verse speaks to every believer, but the words are especially encouraging to those of us in the performance spotlight. Our motives are examined by a multitude of people, and sometimes misunderstood. Our challenge must be to examine ourselves to make certain our deeds are not to gain applause but to bring glory to the Father. We are reminded that Jesus said, "You are the light of the world" (v. 14). Light destroys darkness and detects evil. The darker it gets, the more evident the light. We are told not to hide our light but to let it shine; therefore, let us boldly use our talents in spreading the good news of the gospel. What a precious admonition given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ!

To Keep

GLORIA GAITHER

I took a walk beside the morning sea
To feel the sun climb higher in the sky
And try to spot a dolphin or osprey
And pick up treasures currency
can't buy.

The orange sponge—still frosted in
sea foam—
Torn loose and washed ashore by last
nights' storm,
Harbored a tiny crab in catacombs
Who peered at me and thought
there was no harm.

A wisp of seaweed greener than
the grass—
Another tinted crimson like the dawn
Glistened in the sun like bits of glass
Left behind by children when
they're gone.

I chose them both—and iridescent
shells
That had been broke by jogger's
careless step.
The pair, together where they fell,
I thought were lovely, needed to
be kept.

A sand dollar was broken in
the sand;
The Holy Doves of Heaven all
had flown,
And just one starfish arm without
a hand
Was left of it, but still I brought
it home.

I also kept a piece of drifted wood
Some shells of black and yellow
that I found;
Collected all the pink shells that
I could
Then lost them through a hole out
on the ground.

With these for you I'll make a piece
of art—
Arrange them like the mem'ries in
my mind
Upon the driftwood canvas of my
heart
Now, keep them where they're
easiest to find.

heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

8"Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 9In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever. Amen.[a]

14"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Fasting to Be Seen Only by God

16"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place;* and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.[a]

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

19"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

6:13 [a]NU-Text omits *For Yours* through *Amen.* **6:18** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *openly.*



MARK LOWRY • Homecoming Artist, the *Gaither Vocal Band*

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. | MATTHEW 5:43, 44

Wow! Those words are convicting. It looks like Jesus wants us to *love* our enemies. And on top of that, we're to "bless those who curse" us, and after that, "do good to those who hate [us]." And after that fun-filled day, lay our heads on our pillows at night and "pray for those who spitefully use [us] and persecute [us]."

Jesus said that. Not Billy Graham. Not Mother Theresa. Not Luther or Calvin or Chesterton. Jesus. Our Leader. Our Savior. Our God. Jehovah wrapped in flesh spoke those words.

So give it a try. It will work. Jesus said to love our enemies.

The Lamp of the Body

22"The lamp of the body is the eye. If
therefore your eye is good, your whole
body will be full of light. 23But if your eye
is bad, your whole body will be full of dark-
ness. If therefore the light that is in you is
darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

You Cannot Serve God and Riches

24"No one can serve two masters; for
either he will hate the one and love the
other, or else he will be loyal to the one and
despise the other. You cannot serve God
and mammon.

Do Not Worry

25"Therefore I say to you, do not worry
about your life, what you will eat or what
you will drink; nor about your body, what
you will put on. Is not life more than food
and the body more than clothing? 26Look
at the birds of the air, for they neither sow
nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your
heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of
more value than they? 27Which of you by
worrying can add one cubit to his stature?
28"So why do you worry about clothing?
Consider the lilies of the field, how they
grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29and yet I
say to you that even Solomon in all his glory
was not arrayed like one of these. 30Now if
God so clothes the grass of the field, which
today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the
oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O
you of little faith?
31"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What
shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or
'What shall we wear?' 32For after all these
things the Gentiles seek. For your heav-
enly Father knows that you need all these
things. 33But seek first the kingdom of God
and His righteousness, and all these things
shall be added to you. 34Therefore do not
worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will
worry about its own things. Sufficient for
the day *is* its own trouble.

Do Not Judge

7 "Judge not, that you be not judged.
2For with what judgment you judge,
you will be judged; and with the measure
you use, it will be measured back to you.
3And why do you look at the speck in your
brother's eye, but do not consider the
plank in your own eye? 4Or how can you
say to your brother, 'Let me remove the
speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is*
in your own eye? 5Hypocrite! First remove
the plank from your own eye, and then you
will see clearly to remove the speck from
your brother's eye.
6"Do not give what is holy to the dogs;
nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they
trample them under their feet, and turn
and tear you in pieces.

Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking

7"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek,
and you will find; knock, and it will be
opened to you. 8For everyone who asks
receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him
who knocks it will be opened. 9Or what man
is there among you who, if his son asks for
bread, will give him a stone? 10Or if he asks
for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11If you
then, being evil, know how to give good gifts
to your children, how much more will your
Father who is in heaven give good things to
those who ask Him! 12Therefore, whatever
you want men to do to you, do also to them,
for this is the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow Way

13"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is*
the gate and broad *is* the way that leads
to destruction, and there are many who go
in by it. 14Because[a] narrow *is* the gate and
difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and
there are few who find it.

You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

15"Beware of false prophets, who come
to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly
they are ravenous wolves. 16You will know
them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes
from thornbushes or figs from thistles?
17Even so, every good tree bears good fruit,
but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18A good
tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad
tree bear good fruit. 19Every tree that does
not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown
into the fire. 20Therefore by their fruits you
will know them.

7:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *How . . . !*

I Never Knew You

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Build on the Rock

24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

8 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. 2 And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

3 Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

5 Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, 6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."



SONYA ISAACS YEARY • Homecoming Artist, *The Isaacs*

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? | MATTHEW 6:25, 26

This scripture takes me back to a time when I was single and searching for the "one" God had for me. I believed in His perfect timing and that one day my Mr. Right would come. Being thirty-something already, and feeling time and age stealing my youth, I remember a particular spring morning when I woke up so sad, feeling desperate and upset because I felt it was too late for my dreams of true love and a family. I sat down on my living room couch for prayer and devotions. As tears poured down my face, I closed my eyes, Bible in hand, and prayerfully asked the Lord to give me a word that would lighten my heart and give me new patience for His will.

[8]The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. [9]For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one,* 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it.*"

[10]When Jesus heard *it,* He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! [11]And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. [12]But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." [13]Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, *so* let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Peter's Mother-in-Law Healed

[14]Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. [15]So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.[a]

Many Healed in the Evening

[16]When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, [17]that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

> "*He Himself took our infirmities*
> *And bore our sicknesses.*"[a]

The Cost of Discipleship

[18]And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. [19]Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

[20]And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."

[21]Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

8:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Him.* **8:17** [a]Isaiah 53:4

It was so quiet in those moments of prayer. No noise. No traffic. No interruptions. There was just complete silence, except for a new sound I suddenly noticed outside the nearby window, one that in all my years of living there I had never heard—the sound of a bird whistling like it had come just for me, a beautiful, peaceful song. I wiped my eyes, and while the calming serenading at the window continued, I let my Bible fall open in my lap, and invited the Lord to speak to me through His Word. It fell open to these verses, and as I began to read them, my mood of desperation turned to grateful rejoicing, because I knew the Lord saw my heart and that even as He cared for the birds, He was taking care of me! What a glorious reminder of His love! Now I love to share this story with my wonderful husband, whom God brought to me in the perfect season of my life not long after I learned to trust His timing and surrender to His will. What assurance it is to know that if we seek His Word, we will know how much He cares for us and that He is always watching over us!

[22]But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Wind and Wave Obey Jesus

[23]Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. [24]And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. [25]Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

[26]But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. [27]So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

Two Demon-Possessed Men Healed

[28]When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes,[a] there met Him two demon-possessed *men,* coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. [29]And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

[30]Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. [31]So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away[a] into the herd of swine."

[32]And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

[33]Then those who kept *them* fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men.* [34]And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged *Him* to depart from their region.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic

9 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. [2]Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a

8:28 [a]NU-Text reads *Gadarenes.* **8:31** [a]NU-Text reads *send us.*



SONYA ISAACS YEARY • Homecoming Artist, *The Isaacs*

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. | MATTHEW 6:33

Sometimes the hardest thing to learn as a Christian is how to pray. I became a believer as a young girl and grew up in church; always comfortable praying and asking God for things I needed. In fact, I was so comfortable presenting my wants and needs that as a young adult I found myself having to re-evaluate my prayer habits. I had just gone through a devastating emotional loss and was so broken that I honestly felt like I'd lost my will to live. My heart was crushed and everything I'd built my dreams around was suddenly gone. When I prayed I would catch myself begging God to answer in the way I wanted, the way I thought seemed best. It didn't even dawn on me until I read this scripture that I was trying to get my way and was not even concerned about what He wanted for me.

bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

[3]And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"

[4]But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? [5]For which is easier, to say, '*Your* sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? [6]But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." [7]And he arose and departed to his house.

[8]Now when the multitudes saw *it,* they marveled[a] and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

Matthew the Tax Collector

[9]As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

[10]Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. [11]And when the Pharisees saw *it,* they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

[12]When Jesus heard *that,* He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. [13]But go and learn what *this* means: *'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'*[a] For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."[b]

I am strongly persuaded that after theology there is no art that can be placed on a level with music; for besides theology, music is the only art capable of affording peace and joy of the heart.

MARTIN LUTHER

9:8 [a]NU-Text reads *were afraid.* **9:13** [a]Hosea 6:6 [b]NU-Text omits *to repentance.*

One day I picked up my Bible to find some comfort and God showed me this scripture. I wasn't doing at all what He said. I wasn't seeking *first* the kingdom of God, or His will, and I wasn't concerned with righteousness as much as I was with getting what I thought I needed. From that moment on, I realized that when we *seek the Lord,* our will begins to line up with His, and we begin to be not so insistent on things He doesn't mean for us to have. I believe He wants us to be happy and feel loved, but we can't bypass Him, trying to get it our own way. When we seek *Him* with all our hearts, He will give us not only what we need, but we will also begin to see that He is satisfying our deepest desires as He removes our insistence on things we shouldn't pursue. Through this experience, day by day it became easier to let go of my will and pray for His. I am learning that He knows what I truly need in my life. Maybe if I had learned this secret of prayer before I got myself into unnecessary messes, I could have avoided some of the heartaches of life!

Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting

14 Then the disciples of John came to
Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees
fast often,[a] but Your disciples do not fast?"
15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the
friends of the bridegroom mourn as long
as the bridegroom is with them? But the
days will come when the bridegroom will
be taken away from them, and then they
will fast. 16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk
cloth on an old garment; for the patch
pulls away from the garment, and the tear
is made worse. 17 Nor do they put new wine
into old wineskins, or else the wineskins
break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins
are ruined. But they put new wine into new
wineskins, and both are preserved."

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

18 While He spoke these things to them,
behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him,
saying, "My daughter has just died, but
come and lay Your hand on her and she will
live." 19 So Jesus arose and followed him, and
so *did* His disciples.
20 And suddenly, a woman who had a flow
of blood for twelve years came from behind
and touched the hem of His garment. 21 For
she said to herself, "If only I may touch His
garment, I shall be made well." 22 But Jesus
turned around, and when He saw her He
said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your
faith has made you well." And the woman
was made well from that hour.
23 When Jesus came into the ruler's house,
and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd
wailing, 24 He said to them, "Make room, for
the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they
ridiculed Him. 25 But when the crowd was
put outside, He went in and took her by the
hand, and the girl arose. 26 And the report of
this went out into all that land.

9:14 [a]NU-Text brackets *often* as disputed.



JEFF EASTER AND SHERI EASTER • Homecoming Artists, *The Easters*

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. | MATTHEW 6:33

In 1984, I felt like I had hit rock bottom. I thought I was a disappointment to my friends and family and felt at times as if I had nothing to live for. I had heard about Jesus all my life through my daddy and his brothers and the songs they had written. I had performed in churches since I was a kid, but I made some bad decisions that left me feeling like a failure. One night I was especially down on myself and I finally realized that I would never get to heaven riding on my daddy's coattails. It was late and I went home and got Daddy out of bed and asked him to pray with me. After we prayed, he told me that he couldn't promise that everything would always be perfect, but that if I put God first in all that I did, all these other things would be added unto me, from the scripture Matthew 6:33. It was amazing how quickly my life began to turn around. Within two months of praying this prayer and trusting this scripture, I met my wife, Sheri. We have been blessed to celebrate twenty-five years of marriage, and we share our stage nightly as we perform with each other and our three children.

Two Blind Men Healed

[27]When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

[28]And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

[29]Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." [30]And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See *that* no one knows *it*." [31]But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

A Mute Man Speaks

[32]As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. [33]And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

[34]But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."

The Compassion of Jesus

[35]Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.[a] [36]But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary[a] and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. [37]Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. [38]Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

The Twelve Apostles

10 And when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him,* He gave them power *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. [2]Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother; [3]Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was[a] Thaddaeus; [4]Simon the Cananite,[a] and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

Sending Out the Twelve

[5]These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. [6]But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. [7]And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' [8]Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead,[a] cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. [9]Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, [10]nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

[11]"Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. [12]And when you go into a household, greet it. [13]If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. [14]And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. [15]Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Persecutions Are Coming

[16]"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as

9:35 [a]NU-Text omits *among the people.* **9:36** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *harassed.* **10:3** [a]NU-Text omits *Lebbaeus, whose surname was.* **10:4** [a]NU-Text reads *Cananaean.* **10:8** [a]NU-Text reads *raise the dead, cleanse the lepers;* M-Text omits *raise the dead.*



serpents and harmless as doves. [17]But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. [18]You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. [19]But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; [20]for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

[21]"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. [22]And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. [23]When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

[24]"A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. [25]It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,[a] how much more *will they call* those of his household! [26]Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

Jesus Teaches the Fear of God

[27]"Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. [28]And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. [29]Are

10:25 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebul*.



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. | MATTHEW 7:13, 14

Twice before, we had climbed this high mountain. To make the climb, we drove almost to the top, and then finished by climbing the rest on foot.

Mount Evans in Colorado has the highest mountain road in the United States, and nobody doubts this claim once they've made it to the top. Near the top is the shelter house which is literally built into the rocks for safety from the high winds. Most people stop there, sip hot tea, and enjoy homemade doughnuts while marveling at the view. But the brave souls don jackets and climb the rocky trail to the peak.

The Mount Evans trip had always been a thrill, but this particular day I was very excited. John, our son-in-law, loves a map. The family has had many friendly arguments over his continual map reading. But this day, because of John and his map, I discovered something truly amazing. I found my homeland—where I grew up. There it was, maybe a hundred miles away. John, with map unfurled, was pointing to landmarks that I remembered! There

not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Confess Christ Before Men

32"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Christ Brings Division

34"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35For I have come to *'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';* 36and *'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'*[a] 37He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

A Cup of Cold Water

40"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in

10:36 [a]Micah 7:6

was the big high plain with what we called "the Hog's Back" curving through it, and there was the South Platte River. It was all spread out before us like a living map. I was so thrilled I could hardly stand it!

Finally, as we started down the mountain we suddenly saw something else to astound us—an apparition rose through the mist of distance. A great argument ensued. John's map was consulted, and sure enough, we were seeing the skyscrapers of Denver, looking for all the world like an ethereal city come down from heaven surrounded by swirling clouds.

In another time, another place, another John *did* see the Holy City come down from the heavens. Twice before we had been up the mountain, but without John and his map, we didn't know we were looking at my beloved homeland or the mile-high city.

John and his map can be translated into a Christian and his Bible. We need to keep checking our map! If we don't, we may not know where we are, or we may have the homeland in view and not recognize the landmarks. We might even miss seeing the glory of the Holy City altogether!

Both the map and the Bible are at times a little hard to read, but it's always worth the effort to find out where we are, where we are going, and what we've seen.

John and his maps! He can make a believer out of you!

the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

John the Baptist Sends Messengers to Jesus

11 Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

[2]And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of[a] his disciples [3]and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

[4]Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: [5]*The* blind see and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised up and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. [6]And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

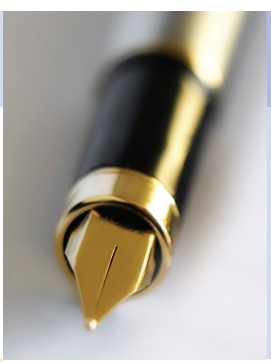
[7]As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? [8]But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. [9]But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. [10]For this is *he* of whom it is written:

'Behold, I send My messenger before
Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before You.'[a]

[11]"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. [12]And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. [13]For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. [14]And if you are willing to receive *it,* he is Elijah who is to come. [15]He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

[16]"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, [17]and saying:

11:2 [a]NU-Text reads *by* for *two of.* **11:10** [a]Malachi 3:1



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. | MATTHEW 7:18, 19

The same chapter that begins by telling me not to judge so that I will not be judged also teaches me to discern a tree by its fruit. This is not a contradiction. There is a difference between judging motives, which is forbidden, and discerning fruit, which is required. I am certain that the Lord will give insight to the remnant heart so that it will be possible to discern a wolf in sheep's clothing. There are many wolves out there. Some are in sheep's clothing; some are in shepherd's clothing. The wolves who sneak into the flock and rise to leadership are the most dangerous. May the Lord give us a discerning heart as we test the tree for fruit and, at the same time, may He deliver us from judging hearts and motives.

'We played the flute for you,
And you did not dance;
We mourned to you,
And you did not lament.'

18For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."[a]

Woe to the Impenitent Cities

20Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 21"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be[a] brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

Jesus Gives True Rest

25At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. 26Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 27All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him.* 28Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2And when the Pharisees saw *it,* they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

3But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? 5Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? 6Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple. 7But if you had known what *this* means, *'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,'*[a] you would not have condemned the guiltless. 8For the Son of Man is Lord even[a] of the Sabbath."

Healing on the Sabbath

9Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. 10And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—that they might accuse Him.

11Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it* out? 12Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." 13Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored as whole as the other. 14Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Behold, My Servant

15But when Jesus knew *it,* He withdrew from there. And great multitudes[a] followed Him, and He healed them all. 16Yet He warned them not to make Him known, 17that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

18 *"Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,*
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him,

11:19 [a]NU-Text reads *works.* **11:23** [a]NU-Text reads *will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be.* **12:7** [a]Hosea 6:6 **12:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *even.* **12:15** [a]NU-Text brackets *multitudes* as disputed.

And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.
19 *He will not quarrel nor cry out,*
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
20 *A bruised reed He will not break,*
And smoking flax He will not quench,
Till He sends forth justice to victory;
21 *And in His name Gentiles will trust."*[a]

A House Divided Cannot Stand

22 Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and[a] mute man both spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

24 Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, "This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub,[a] the ruler of the demons."

25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. 30 He who is not with Me is against

12:21 [a]Isaiah 42:1–4 **12:22** [a]NU-Text omits *blind and*. **12:24** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebul*.



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. . . . But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour. . . . He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." . . . He went and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. | MATTHEW 9:20–25

Taking a sea cruise is a special time of fellowship with old friends, renewing acquaintances and making new friends. One of my favorite optional planned activities aboard ship is a talent show. On a recent Homecoming cruise, I found a seat by the window so I could enjoy looking out over the beautiful water as I listened to each participant. There was already a large audience gathered and as people continued to drift in, a couple caught my attention, the lady in particular. It was not their outward appearance that drew my attention, because they were dressed in very casual cruise attire. The lady's countenance radiated an unmistakable glow. I thought, "What a beautiful lady!" Later this same lady approached me on the deck and through tears said, "I would like to thank all of you for the music." She shared that some time ago she lifted something that was too heavy and suffered what the doctors call a "sudden death stroke" that left much of her

Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

The Unpardonable Sin

31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come.

A Tree Known by Its Fruit

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by *its* fruit. 34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart[a] brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Scribes and Pharisees Ask for a Sign

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in

12:35 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of his heart*.

body paralyzed. When the doctors had done all they could, one of them suggested that she go home, get some gospel music, and get well listening to music. Throughout her convalescence, unable to do anything, she would sit before her TV and watch Gaither videos, and God used the music in her healing. I could sense the deep trauma she had experienced, emotionally as well as physically, due to the stroke. But the gratitude in her heart for the Lord and for her restored health was far more evident. Her husband had made reservations for the cruise during her convalescence, in faith that they would be able to make the trip. She was still dealing with serious health issues, but her countenance radiated the joy of Christ.

Christ gives restoration to the broken. Matthew 9 gives reference to Jairus, a man with a broken home, and the woman with the issue of blood, a person with a broken hope. It is interesting that Jairus and this woman—two opposite people—met at the feet of Jesus. Jairus was a leading Jewish man; she was an anonymous woman with no prestige or resources. He was a synagogue leader, whereas her affliction kept her from worship. Jairus came pleading for his daughter; the woman came with a need of her own. The girl had been healthy for twelve years and then died; the woman had been ill for 12 years and was now made whole.

Jairus' need was public—all knew it; the woman's need was private—only Jesus understood. Both Jairus and the woman trusted Christ, and He met their needs. He still meets needs today and restores the broken.

Gospel Songs

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28

WILL L. Thompson was a successful songwriter, having amassed wealth beyond his greatest expectations when he had first set out from Liverpool, Ohio, trying to sell his writing. Actually, he ended up developing his own publishing company and churned out hit after hit, eventually earning the nickname "The Bard of Ohio." But it wasn't until he determined to commit all of his music to the praise of the Lord, rather than continue in the secular music he had been so successful with, that he ended up writing the most significant song of his life. Thompson had a heart for reaching small-town churches with music, and as he developed his ministry of traveling back roads of the Midwest to bring quality worship music to those ignored by other big-name evangelists and musicians, he wrote "Softly and Tenderly," inviting all of its hearers to "come home."

The song so beautifully poses the invitation that Jesus offers over and over throughout the Gospels: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28); "Come, follow Me" (Luke 18:22); "He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). It quickly became a staple of evangelical meetings and concerts across the United States. In fact, Thompson developed a relationship with famed evangelist D.L. Moody, and as Moody lay on his deathbed, he told his friend, "Will, I would rather have written 'Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling' than anything I have been able to do in my whole life."

Softly and Tenderly

Will L. Thompson, 1880

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
Calling for you and for me;
See, on the portals He's waiting and watching,
Watching for you and for me.

Refrain:
Come home, come home,
You who are weary, come home;
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home!

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
Pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not His mercies,
Mercies for you and for me?

Refrain

Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing,
Passing from you and from me;
Shadows are gathering, deathbeds are coming,
Coming for you and for me.

Refrain

O for the wonderful love He has promised,
Promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, He has mercy and pardon,
Pardon for you and for me.

Refrain

the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here. 42The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here.

An Unclean Spirit Returns

43"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. 45Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers Send for Him

46While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. 47Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

48But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 50For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

The Parable of the Sower

13 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2And great multitudes were gathered together to



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward. | MATTHEW 10:42

If you live in Minnesota or Wisconsin or Michigan and a big snow is predicted to be on the way, you accept it. It's a way of life and the snowplows fill up their gas tanks for all-night hauls. But if you live in the South, say, Virginia or Tennessee, and the news goes out that a "big snow is coming," everybody runs to the grocery and gets ready to be stranded for a few hours or days. The gentle South just isn't used to hard winter ways.

On our country road in Tennessee, there were several little houses of very poor people. I didn't know any of the people who lived in those houses, but my twenty-year-old daughter got to know some of them. She was a friendly little talker and got acquainted in grocery stores and filling stations.

The winter when the TV forecasters gleefully predicted that the big snow was on its way, I rushed out to the store and got groceries for the family, candles for emergencies, and logs for the fireplace. I came back home feeling smug and self-satisfied. My young daughter started home

Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Purpose of Parables

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
15 *For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,

from work a little early, but got to the house a bit late. "Why?" I inquired. "Well," she said, "there's a little Mrs. Brown who lives in a shabby house down by the gravel works place. Her mind is not very good and she sort of wanders in and out of reality. I give her a ride when she's walking to the store. I happened to go by. I was afraid she wouldn't be ready for a big snow, so I stopped to see her." "What happened?" I said. "I asked her if she knew a storm was coming and if she had enough food and would she like to go to the store. She wanted to know who would pay if she went, so I told her I would. We went and had a wonderful time, stocking up on a few things. It cost me thirty-eight dollars but it was worth it."

Since I am her mother, I know she only made fifty dollars a week. It was enough to fill the gas tank in her car twice, or enough to fill up a hungry stomach for a little old lady, whose mind wanders a bit so that she can't remember to clean her house. But she was going to get caught by the big snow every bit as much as we who were much smugger and safer. By the way, I was much less smug and self-satisfied after Dee's arrival home.

No wonder Jesus' disciples were all young men. The young have tender hearts, thoughtful hearts, eager to give the cup of cold water. Make my heart young, Lord, and ever mindful of the big snows in other people's lives.

Lest they should understand with their
hearts and turn,
So that I should[a] *heal them.*[b]

16 But blessed *are* your eyes for they see,
and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly,
I say to you that many prophets and righ-
teous *men* desired to see what you see, and
did not see *it,* and to hear what you hear,
and did not hear *it.*

The Parable of the Sower Explained

18 "Therefore hear the parable of the
sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the
kingdom, and does not understand *it,* then
the wicked *one* comes and snatches away
what was sown in his heart. This is he who
received seed by the wayside. 20 But he who
received the seed on stony places, this is he
who hears the word and immediately receives
it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself,
but endures only for a while. For when tribu-
lation or persecution arises because of the
word, immediately he stumbles. 22 Now he
who received seed among the thorns is he
who hears the word, and the cares of this
world and the deceitfulness of riches choke
the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 But
he who received seed on the good ground is
he who hears the word and understands *it,*
who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a
hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

24 Another parable He put forth to them,
saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a
man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 but
while men slept, his enemy came and sowed
tares among the wheat and went his way.
26 But when the grain had sprouted and pro-
duced a crop, then the tares also appeared.
27 So the servants of the owner came and
said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed
in your field? How then does it have tares?'
28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.'
The servants said to him, 'Do you want us
then to go and gather them up?' 29 But he

13:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *would.* [b]Isaiah 6:9, 10



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You." But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." | MATTHEW 12:46–50

My family calls me "Brother Mother" at home. Paula, our oldest daughter, started it. It's a joke. You know how kids are about parents. I never gave it any serious thought, but even so, it always pleased me, way down deep. Then one day, thinking about it, I remarked to Doug, "Maybe we should title this piece 'Brother Mother.'" We both laughed and forgot it. Forgot, that is, until the next time I picked up my Bible, and those very words in Scripture jumped out at me from Matthew 12.

said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." '"

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

31Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

The Parable of the Leaven

33Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures[a] of meal till it was all leavened."

Prophecy and the Parables

34All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, 35that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

"I will open My mouth in parables;
I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."[a]

The Parable of the Tares Explained

36Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one.* 39The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the

13:33 [a]Greek *sata,* approximately two pecks in all **13:35** [a]Psalm 78:2

So there it is. That funny little family, who so love to laugh at my eccentricities and foibles, had just unwittingly paid me a very fine compliment. Luckily they consider me not merely a natural, earthly mother, but one with them in their daily struggle of learning how to be a Christian. We are, after all, just learners together, each trying our best to follow the better, higher road of life. It's the road where Jesus walked, long ago, and still is walking, urging us to climb along with him.

My husband, children, mother, in-laws, sons-in-law, and one brother and sister-in-law are all on that same road.

If it's true that we are all one another's mother, sister, brother, then it behooves me to share everything I am and have to encourage each family member.

And who is my family?

Anyone who obeys my Father in heaven is my brother, sister, and mother!

angels. 40Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

45"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Dragnet

47"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

51Jesus said to them,[a] "Have you understood all these things?"

They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."[b]

52Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning[a] the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old."

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

53Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. 54When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works? 55Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses,[a] Simon, and Judas? 56And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?" 57So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." 58Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

John the Baptist Beheaded

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus 2and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." 3For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

6But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. 7Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

8So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter."

9And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded *it* to be given to *her.* 10So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. 11And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother. 12Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

Feeding the Five Thousand

13When Jesus heard *it,* He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. 14And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. 15When it was evening,

13:51 [a]NU-Text omits *Jesus said to them.* [b]NU-Text omits *Lord.*
13:52 [a]Or *for* **13:55** [a]NU-Text reads *Joseph.*

His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

17 And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

18 He said, "Bring them here to Me." 19 Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. 20 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. 21 Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Sea

22 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. 23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. 24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea,[a] tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind *was* boisterous,[a] he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

31 And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33 Then those who were in the boat came and[a] worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

Many Touch Him and Are Made Well

34 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of[a] Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, 36 and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well.

Defilement Comes from Within

15 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, *'Honor your father and your mother'*; [a] and, *'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'*[b] 5 But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* a gift *to God*" — 6 then he need not honor his father or mother.'[a] Thus you have made the commandment[b] of God of no effect by your tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 *'These* people *draw near to Me with*
their mouth,
And[a] *honor Me with their lips,*
But their heart is far from Me.
9 *And in vain they worship Me,*
Teaching as doctrines the
commandments of men.' "[a]

10 When He had called the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear and understand: 11 Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

14:24 [a]NU-Text reads *many furlongs away from the land.* **14:30** [a]NU-Text brackets *that* and *boisterous* as disputed. **14:33** [a]NU-Text omits *came and.* **14:34** [a]NU-Text reads *came to land at.* **15:4** [a]Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16 [b]Exodus 21:17 **15:6** [a]NU-Text omits *or mother.* [b]NU-Text reads *word.* **15:8** [a]NU-Text omits *draw near to Me with their mouth, And.* **15:9** [a]Isaiah 29:13

13 But He answered and said, "Every
plant which My heavenly Father has not
planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone.
They are blind leaders of the blind. And if
the blind leads the blind, both will fall into
a ditch."
15 Then Peter answered and said to Him,
"Explain this parable to us."
16 So Jesus said, "Are you also still without
understanding? 17 Do you not yet understand
that whatever enters the mouth goes into
the stomach and is eliminated? 18 But those
things which proceed out of the mouth
come from the heart, and they defile a man.
19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,
murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts,
false witness, blasphemies. 20 These are *the*
things which defile a man, but to eat with
unwashed hands does not defile a man."

A Gentile Shows Her Faith

21 Then Jesus went out from there and
departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.
22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from
that region and cried out to Him, saying,
"Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David!
My daughter is severely demon-possessed."
23 But He answered her not a word.
And His disciples came and urged Him,
saying, "Send her away, for she cries out
after us."
24 But He answered and said, "I was not
sent except to the lost sheep of the house
of Israel."
25 Then she came and worshiped Him,
saying, "Lord, help me!"
26 But He answered and said, "It is not
good to take the children's bread and throw
it to the little dogs."



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." . . . Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. | MATTHEW 15:23, 28

When people approached Jesus without love, He was silent. The Canaanite woman had heard of Him and His healings. She apparently had heard of Him like she had heard of witch doctors who might help her. When she begged Him to cast the devil from her daughter, Jesus answered her not a word. As she continued to ask, He finally said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

The difference between children and dogs or people and animals is the ability to know and to love. She had been so intent in her scrutiny of Him that something quickened in her heart, some belief, some love, and she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

By that statement she made Him the loving Master and herself the hungry, unloving dog—a correct assessment of the facts. He was moved by her grasp of the issue, and said, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire."

And the child was made whole. It was a miracle of love.

[27]And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

[28]Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Jesus Heals Great Multitudes

[29]Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. [30]Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them *the* lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. [31]So the multitude marveled when they saw *the* mute speaking, *the* maimed made whole, *the* lame walking, and *the* blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

Feeding the Four Thousand

[32]Now Jesus called His disciples to *Himself* and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

[33]Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

[34]Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?"

And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish."

[35]So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. [36]And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples; and the disciples *gave* to the multitude. [37]So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. [38]Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. [39]And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.[a]

The Pharisees and Sadducees Seek a Sign

16 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. [2]He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, '*It will be* fair weather, for the sky is red'; [3]and in the morning, '*It will be* foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites![a] You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times. [4]A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet[a] Jonah." And He left them and departed.

The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees

[5]Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. [6]Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

[7]And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we have taken no bread."

[8]But Jesus, being aware of *it,* said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?[a] [9]Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? [10]Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? [11]How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—*but* to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." [12]Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

[13]When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

[14]So they said, "Some *say* John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

[15]He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

[16]Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

[17]Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. [18]And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this

15:39 [a]NU-Text reads *Magadan.* **16:3** [a]NU-Text omits *Hypocrites.*
16:4 [a]NU-Text omits *the prophet.* **16:8** [a]NU-Text reads *you have no bread.*

rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed[a] in heaven."

20Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

21From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

23But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him

24Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

28"Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount

17 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us[a] make here three

16:19 [a]Or *will have been bound . . . will have been loosed*
17:4 [a]NU-Text reads *I will.*



BILL GAITHER

Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. | MATTHEW 16:25

Anyone who knows me at all knows that I believe wholeheartedly in the principle of giving. I am convinced there is no more tangible way of living out our faith than living generously. I saw giving modeled so powerfully by my great-grandparents, my grandparents, and my own parents, and at this age (seventy-two at the time of this writing) I am still drawing from their example every single day.

My folks were not wealthy people. But whatever they had, they shared. You could not stop by the house without being offered something from their garden or a fresh-baked treat out of their oven, or whatever else they

tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" 6And when the disciples heard *it,* they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. 7But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." 8When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

9Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

10And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

11Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first[a] and will restore all things. 12But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." 13Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

A Boy Is Healed

14And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, 15"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic[a] and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

17Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." 18And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

19Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

20So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief;[a] for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."[a]

17:11 [a]NU-Text omits *first*. **17:15** [a]Literally *moonstruck* **17:20** [a]NU-Text reads *little faith*. **17:21** [a]NU-Text omits this verse.

had on hand. They probably didn't realize I was paying attention as a kid, but that way of life was too remarkable not to notice.

Not only do we give because there are so many needs around us, but also because there is no future in holding onto "stuff." Learning to hold on loosely to the temporary things teaches us, as well as future generations, that our lives are not about what we own, but about what (or who) owns our hearts.

I don't entirely understand *how* or *why* the principle of giving works, but living on less so we can give feels abundantly more prosperous than living on more and keeping it to ourselves! God loves a cheerful giver, 2 Corinthians 9:7 reminds us, so having His blessing is certainly worth more than anything else we could possibly desire.

When we are willing to give everything we've got, it is amazing how content we become. And the more content we become, the more we give. It's a win-win principle!

Jesus Again Predicts His Death and Resurrection

22 Now while they were staying[a] in Galilee,
Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about
to be betrayed into the hands of men, 23 and
they will kill Him, and the third day He will
be raised up." And they were exceedingly
sorrowful.

Peter and His Master Pay Their Taxes

24 When they had come to Capernaum,[a]
those who received the *temple* tax came to
Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay
the *temple* tax?"

25 He said, "Yes."

And when he had come into the house,
Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do
you think, Simon? From whom do the
kings of the earth take customs or taxes,
from their sons or from strangers?"

26 Peter said to Him, "From strangers."

Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free.
27 Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to
the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that
comes up first. And when you have opened
its mouth, you will find a piece of money;[a]
take that and give it to them for Me and you."

Who Is the Greatest?

18 At that time the disciples came to
Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest
in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him,
set him in the midst of them, 3 and said,
"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are con-
verted and become as little children, you
will by no means enter the kingdom of
heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles him-
self as this little child is the greatest in the
kingdom of heaven. 5 Whoever receives one
little child like this in My name receives Me.

Jesus Warns of Offenses

6 "Whoever causes one of these little ones
who believe in Me to sin, it would be better

17:22 [a]NU-Text reads *gathering together.* **17:24** [a]NU-Text reads *Capharnaum* (here and elsewhere). **17:27** [a]Greek *stater,* the exact amount to pay the temple tax (didrachma) for two



GARY McSPADDEN • Homecoming Artist, Formerly with *The Imperials*, *The Bill Gaither Trio*, and *The Gaither Vocal Band*

Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." | MATTHEW 18:2–4

On September 11, 2001, my six-year-old grandson was at his public school in his first grade class. As the events of that fateful day unfolded, the teacher began telling the children some of the things that happened. As she spoke to the children in reassuring terms, she explained to them that some very bad men had destroyed some buildings and hurt lots of people. The teacher said that although there were some bad people in the world, there were many more good people than bad. She told them that she believed everything was going to be all right. As is usual with kids, they were full of questions. Questions like, "Who were the bad men?" "Why did they do this bad thing?" "Are they coming here where we are?"

for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

8"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. 9And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

10"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. 11For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.[a]

12"What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? 13And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. 14Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Dealing with a Sinning Brother

15"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'*[a] 17And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

18"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

18:11 [a]NU-Text omits this verse. **18:16** [a]Deuteronomy 19:15

Not wanting to unnecessarily upset the children, the teacher answered them very carefully. After all the questions were answered, the teacher wanted to make the children feel more secure, so she asked this question: "Who is it that is going to take care of you and make sure you are safe?" She was fully expecting the kids to say Mom and Dad, but in unison, fifteen little voices said, "Jesus!"

The teacher was shocked and surprised. This is a public school, so she paused and carefully chose her words. She said to the kids, "Yes, I suppose that is true. He is the 'Big Guy' up in the sky, but I meant your parents are the ones who will take care of you."

Then one little voice coming from a six-year-old girl said, "But teacher, it's Jesus! He's the one who will take care of us."

It is so easy to trust in arms of flesh for our protection. But as the children said so clearly, "It's Jesus!" How simple. And we must come to God as little children.

[19]"Again I say[a] to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. [20]For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

[21]Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

[22]Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. [23]Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. [24]And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. [25]But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. [26]The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' [27]Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

[28]"But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' [29]So his fellow servant fell down at his feet[a] and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'[b] [30]And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. [31]So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. [32]Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. [33]Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' [34]And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

[35]"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."[a]

Marriage and Divorce

19 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, *that* He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. [2]And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

[3]The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?"

[4]And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made[a] *them* at the beginning *'made them male and female,'*[b] [5]and said, *'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'*?[a] [6]So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

[7]They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

[8]He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. [9]And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality,[a] and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

[10]His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not to marry."

Jesus Teaches on Celibacy

[11]But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only *those* to whom it has been given: [12]For there are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept *it,* let him accept *it.*"

Jesus Blesses Little Children

[13]Then little children were brought to Him that He might put *His* hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.

18:19 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Again, assuredly, I say.* **18:29** [a]NU-Text omits *at his feet.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *all.* **18:35** [a]NU-Text omits *his trespasses.* **19:4** [a]NU-Text reads *created.* [b]Genesis 1:27; 5:2
19:5 [a]Genesis 2:24 **19:9** [a]Or *fornication*

[14]But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." [15]And He laid *His* hands on them and departed from there.

Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler

[16]Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good[a] Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

[17]So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good?[a] No one *is* good but One, *that is,* God.[b] But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

[18]He said to Him, "Which ones?"

Jesus said, "'*You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'* [19] *'Honor your father and your mother,*'[a] and, *'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* "[b]

[20]The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth.[a] What do I still lack?"

[21]Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

[22]But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

With God All Things Are Possible

[23]Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. [24]And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

[25]When His disciples heard *it,* they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

[26]But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

[27]Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"

[28]So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [29]And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[a] or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. [30]But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.

The Master of Life's been good to me. He has given me strength to face past illnesses, and victory in the face of defeat. He has given me life and joy where others saw oblivion. He has given me new purpose to live for, new services to render and old wounds to heal. Life and love go on. Let the music play.

JOHNNY CASH

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

20 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. [2]Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. [3]And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, [4]and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. [5]Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. [6]And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle,[a] and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' [7]They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'[a]

[8]"So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them *their* wages, beginning with the last to the first.' [9]And when those came who *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. [10]But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. [11]And

19:16 [a]NU-Text omits *Good.* **19:17** [a]NU-Text reads *Why do you ask Me about what is good?* [b]NU-Text reads *There is One who is good.*
19:19 [a]Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20 [b]Leviticus 19:18
19:20 [a]NU-Text omits *from my youth.* **19:29** [a]NU-Text omits *or wife.*
20:6 [a]NU-Text omits *idle.* **20:7** [a]NU-Text omits the last clause of this verse.

when they had received *it,* they complained against the landowner, [12]saying, 'These last *men* have worked *only* one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' [13]But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? [14]Take *what is* yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man *the same* as to you. [15]Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' [16]So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."[a]

Jesus a Third Time Predicts His Death and Resurrection

[17]Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, [18]"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, [19]and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."

Greatness Is Serving

[20]Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

[21]And He said to her, "What do you wish?"

She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

[22]But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"[a]

They said to Him, "We are able."

[23]So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with;[a] but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father."

[24]And when the ten heard *it,* they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. [25]But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. [26]Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. [27]And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— [28]just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Two Blind Men Receive Their Sight

[29]Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. [30]And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

[31]Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

[32]So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

[33]They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." [34]So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

The Triumphal Entry

21 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage,[a] at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, [2]saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose *them* and bring *them* to Me. [3]And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

[4]All[a] this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

[5] *"Tell the daughter of Zion,*
'Behold, your King is coming to you,
Lowly, and sitting on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.'"[a]

[6]So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. [7]They brought the donkey

20:16 [a]NU-Text omits the last sentence of this verse. **20:22** [a]NU-Text omits *and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.* **20:23** [a]NU-Text omits *and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.* **21:1** [a]M-Text reads *Bethsphage.* **21:4** [a]NU-Text omits *All.* **21:5** [a]Zechariah 9:9

and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set *Him*[a] on them. [8]And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. [9]Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD*!'*[a]
Hosanna in the highest!"

[10]And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"

[11]So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

[12]Then Jesus went into the temple of God[a] and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. [13]And He said to them, "It is written, *'My house shall be called a house of prayer,'*[a] but you have made it a *'den of thieves.'*"[b]

[14]Then *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. [15]But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant [16]and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?"

And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read,

'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have perfected praise'?"[a]

[17]Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

The Fig Tree Withered

[18]Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. [19]And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.

The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree

[20]And when the disciples saw *it,* they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

[21]So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. [22]And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

Jesus' Authority Questioned

[23]Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

[24]But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: [25]The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' [26]But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." [27]So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know."

And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

[28]"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' [29]He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. [30]Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I *go,* sir,' but he did not go. [31]Which of the two did the will of *his* father?"

They said to Him, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. [32]For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw *it,* you did not afterward relent and believe him.

21:7 [a]NU-Text reads *and He sat.* **21:9** [a]Psalm 118:26 **21:12** [a]NU-Text omits *of God.* **21:13** [a]Isaiah 56:7 [b]Jeremiah 7:11 **21:16** [a]Psalm 8:2

The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers

33 "Hear another parable: There was a
certain landowner who planted a vineyard
and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress
in it and built a tower. And he leased it to
vinedressers and went into a far country.
34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he
sent his servants to the vinedressers, that
they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vine-
dressers took his servants, beat one, killed
one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent
other servants, more than the first, and
they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of
all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They
will respect my son.' 38 But when the vine-
dressers saw the son, they said among
themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us
kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39 So
they took him and cast *him* out of the vine-
yard and killed *him*.

40 "Therefore, when the owner of the
vineyard comes, what will he do to those
vinedressers?"

41 They said to Him, "He will destroy
those wicked men miserably, and lease *his*
vineyard to other vinedressers who will
render to him the fruits in their seasons."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never
read in the Scriptures:

'The stone which the builders
rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.
This was the LORD*'s doing,*
And it is marvelous in our eyes'?[a]

43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom
of God will be taken from you and given
to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And
whoever falls on this stone will be broken;
but on whomever it falls, it will grind him
to powder."

45 Now when the chief priests and
Pharisees heard His parables, they per-
ceived that He was speaking of them. 46 But
when they sought to lay hands on Him,
they feared the multitudes, because they
took Him for a prophet.

21:42 [a]Psalm 118:22, 23



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." | MATTHEW 22:36–40

One day I watched my four-year-old granddaughter, Jamaica, trying to help one-year-old Baby John walk. He approached the feat like a tightrope walker, throwing little arms to the side, trying to get and keep his balance. Whenever he fell, Jamaica would try to pick him up. Sometimes she didn't lift enough and they both fell in a heap. Sometimes she lifted too much and pulled his feet off the floor, overbalancing them both, and down they would go again. He didn't like her help and sent up a howl.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

22 And Jesus answered and spoke to
them again by parables and said:
2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain
king who arranged a marriage for his son,
3 and sent out his servants to call those who
were invited to the wedding; and they were
not willing to come. 4 Again, he sent out
other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are
invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner;
my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all
things *are* ready. Come to the wedding." '
5 But they made light of it and went their
ways, one to his own farm, another to his
business. 6 And the rest seized his servants,
treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them.* 7 But
when the king heard *about it,* he was furi-
ous. And he sent out his armies, destroyed
those murderers, and burned up their city.
8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding
is ready, but those who were invited were
not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the high-
ways, and as many as you find, invite to the
wedding.' 10 So those servants went out into
the highways and gathered together all
whom they found, both bad and good. And
the wedding *hall* was filled with guests.

11 "But when the king came in to see the
guests, he saw a man there who did not have
on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him,
'Friend, how did you come in here without
a wedding garment?' And he was speech-
less. 13 Then the king said to the servants,
'Bind him hand and foot, take him away,
and[a] cast *him* into outer darkness; there will
be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 "For many are called, but few *are*
chosen."

The Pharisees: Is It Lawful to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted
how they might entangle Him in *His* talk.
16 And they sent to Him their disciples with
the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know
that You are true, and teach the way of God
in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for
You do not regard the person of men. 17 Tell

22:13 [a]NU-Text omits *take him away, and.*

"That's a picture of me trying to be a mother," I thought. Sometimes, I didn't lift enough in my children's development and we all fell. Sometimes, I lifted too much and again we fell back instead of growing. The intent of Jamaica's heart was right. She wanted John to walk and walk well, not losing his balance. In her awkward way, she tried to help. Like Jamaica, I've had the right motives. I've wanted my children to live, and live right, not losing their balance. In my awkward way, I've tried to help. Baby John won't hold it against Jamaica that her help wasn't perfect. I hope my girls won't hold it against me that mine has been imperfect. I learned the hard lesson a few years ago that it's destructive to hold it against my parents and my husband's parents that they lifted too little or too much with us. Maybe it's a good place to start, forgiving our imperfect families for their awkward help and, like Baby John does Jamaica, love her for her love and for trying!

us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

18But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, *you* hypocrites? 19Show Me the tax money."

So they brought Him a denarius.

20And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription *is* this?"

21They said to Him, "Caesar's."

And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22When they had heard *these words,* they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

The Sadducees: What About the Resurrection?

23The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, 24saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 25Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. 26Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. 27Last of all the woman died also. 28Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

29Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God[a] in heaven. 31But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32*'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'*?[a] God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." 33And when the multitudes heard *this,* they were astonished at His teaching.

The Scribes: Which Is the First Commandment of All?

34But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *Him a question,* testing Him, and saying, 36"Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?"

37Jesus said to him, "*'You shall love the* LORD *your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'*[a] 38This is *the* first and great commandment. 39And *the* second *is* like it: *'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*[a] 40On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Jesus: How Can David Call His Descendant Lord?

41While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?"

They said to Him, "*The Son* of David."

43He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him *'Lord,'* saying:

44 *'The* LORD *said to my Lord,*
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your
footstool" ?[a]

45If David then calls Him *'Lord,'* how is He his Son?" 46And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees

23 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3Therefore whatever they tell you to observe,[a] *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. 5But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' 8But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ,[a] and you are all brethren. 9Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

13"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,

22:30 [a]NU-Text omits *of God.* **22:32** [a]Exodus 3:6, 15
22:37 [a]Deuteronomy 6:5 **22:39** [a]Leviticus 19:18 **22:44** [a]Psalm 110:1
23:3 [a]NU-Text omits *to observe.* **23:8** [a]NU-Text omits *the Christ.*

hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in *yourselves,* nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. [14]Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.[a]

[15]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

[16]"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged *to perform it.*' [17]Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies[a] the gold? [18]And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged *to perform it.*' [19]Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? [20]Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. [21]He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells[a] in it. [22]And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

[23]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. [24]Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

[25]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.[a] [26]Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

[27]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness. [28]Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

[29]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, [30]and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

[31]"Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. [32]Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' *guilt.* [33]Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? [34]Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, [35]that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. [36]Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Jesus Laments over Jerusalem

[37]"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! [38]See! Your house is left to you desolate; [39]for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the* LORD*!'* "[a]

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

24 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. [2]And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

[3]Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

[4]And Jesus answered and said to them:

23:14 [a]NU-Text omits this verse. **23:17** [a]NU-Text reads *sanctified.*
23:21 [a]M-Text reads *dwelt.* **23:25** [a]M-Text reads *unrighteousness.*
23:39 [a]Psalm 118:26

"Take heed that no one deceives you. [5]For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. [6]And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all[a] *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. [7]For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences,[a] and earthquakes in various places. [8]All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

[9]"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. [10]And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. [11]Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. [12]And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. [13]But he who endures to the end shall be saved. [14]And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The Great Tribulation

[15]"Therefore when you see the *'abomination of desolation,'*[a] spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), [16]"then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. [17]Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. [18]And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. [19]But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! [20]And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. [21]For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world

24:6 [a]NU-Text omits *all.* **24:7** [a]NU-Text omits *pestilences.*
24:15 [a]Daniel 11:31; 12:11



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. | MATTHEW 24:35

I don't remember seeing the worn black Bible tied together with white string until I was plundering Mama's bureau drawer. Being the youngest of seven afforded me a lot of plundering for a kid. *Plundering* was Mama's word for my messing through her stuff where I had no business. The plundering got me many spankings.

Maybe it's a little girl thing. Karlye, our first granddaughter, could find stuff in Grandma's house, but was not into everything. But her younger sister, Lexy, was a different story! At eighteen months she could win your heart instantly and clear your coffee table just as quickly. No matter how childproof we grandparents make a toddler's environment, we still have to say no countless times each day, "No, don't touch. That's hot!" "No, that's sharp!" "No! That's an ouch!"

As a child I did not untie the string from around the Bible Mama had placed deep in the dresser drawer. I could see that the cover and many

until this time, no, nor ever shall be. [22]And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

[23]"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe *it*. [24]For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. [25]See, I have told you beforehand.

[26]"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; *or* 'Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it*. [27]For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. [28]For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

The Coming of the Son of Man

[29]"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [30]Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31]And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

[32]"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. [33]So you also, when you see all these things, know that it[a] is near—at the doors! [34]Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means

24:33 [a]Or *He*

pages had separated from the binding, and I doubted that I could get it back together again. I also knew that the Bible was very special to my mother. As it turned out, many years later when we cleared out the house, I got the Bible. I carefully untied the string, opened the book and found inscribed, "William Eugene Flynn. Born April 16, 1865." That was my mother's father, my grandfather whom I never knew. I could tell the Bible had been well used.

Critics of Christianity want us to believe that the Bible is nothing but a list of negative rules and that God is a cosmic killjoy who delights in saying "No!" Many commandments begin with "You shall not," which are for our benefit. Yet there are a lot more *yeses* found throughout the Scripture. Yes. If we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9). Yes, if we seek, we will find. Yes, if we knock, the door will be opened (Matt. 7:7). Yes, He is preparing a place for us, and yes, He will come back and take us to be with Him (John 14:3). All the promises of God are *yes* in Him (2 Cor. 1:20).

If you feel you're still in the toddler stage of your Christian walk and have not found the hope that is in Christ for day-to-day living—then untie the invisible string that holds your Bible closed and open the exciting and powerful words that give life, joy, peace, and rest (Matt. 24:35).

pass away till all these things take place.
35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My
words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

36 "But of that day and hour no one
knows, not even the angels of heaven,[a] but
My Father only. 37 But as the days of Noah
were, so also will the coming of the Son
of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the
flood, they were eating and drinking, mar-
rying and giving in marriage, until the day
that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not
know until the flood came and took them all
away, so also will the coming of the Son of
Man be. 40 Then two *men* will be in the field:
one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two
women will be grinding at the mill: one will be
taken and the other left. 42 Watch therefore,
for you do not know what hour[a] your Lord
is coming. 43 But know this, that if the mas-
ter of the house had known what hour the
thief would come, he would have watched
and not allowed his house to be broken into.
44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of
Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

45 "Who then is a faithful and wise ser-
vant, whom his master made ruler over
his household, to give them food in due

24:36 [a]NU-Text adds *nor the Son.* **24:42** [a]NU-Text reads *day.*



DONY McGUIRE • Homecoming Artist, Songwriter, Music Minister, Married to Reba Rambo-McGuire

All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. | MATTHEW 25:32–34

I had always interpreted this passage of Scripture to be the categorical singling out of some as sheep and others as goats: I'm good; you're bad. I'm right; you're wrong. I'm a sheep; you're a goat.

This is another one of those passages where I submit a different thought for your consideration. The words of Christ were heard that day by Eastern-trained minds accustomed to Him speaking in allegorical terms in light of their culture. They weren't just hearing words read as black ink on white paper.

How revelatory to understand that in their minds Jesus was talking about the sheep and the goat that coexist in all of us. At the same time, which one will win?

It's that "new man" and "old man" nature, that good and evil thing that's going on in all of us, and yet only one of us survives!

My prayer is that God will continue to give us the desire and hunger to search out the Scriptures in light of what He was saying versus what we think He was saying.

season? [46]Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. [47]Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. [48]But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,'[a] [49]and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, [50]the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, [51]and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

25 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. [2]Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. [3]Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, [4]but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. [5]But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

[6]"And at midnight a cry was *heard:* 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming;[a] go out to meet him!' [7]Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. [8]And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' [9]But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' [10]And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

[11]"Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' [12]But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

[13]"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour[a] in which the Son of Man is coming.

The Parable of the Talents

[14]"For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. [15]And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. [16]Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. [17]And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. [18]But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. [19]After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

[20]"So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' [21]His lord said to him, 'Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' [22]He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' [23]His lord said to him, 'Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

[24]"Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. [25]And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.'

[26]"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. [27]So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. [28]So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents.

[29]'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. [30]And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations

[31]"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy[a] angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. [32]All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from

24:48 [a]NU-Text omits *his coming.* **25:6** [a]NU-Text omits *is coming.*
25:13 [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **25:31** [a]NU-Text omits *holy.*

another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. 33And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

37"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You,* or thirsty and give *You* drink? 38When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You?* 39Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.'

41"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

44"Then they also will answer Him,[a] saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.' 46And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

25:44 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Him.*



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

A woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor." But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." | MATTHEW 26:7–13

Most of us are perfume dabbers and sniffers. Who can resist the tester bottle on the department store counter? Two basic questions must be asked about every perfume. Does it smell good on me? And does the fragrance last? Our daughter DeeDee would roll down all the windows and gasp

The Plot to Kill Jesus

26 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples, [2]"You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

[3]Then the chief priests, the scribes,[a] and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, [4]and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him.* [5]But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

The Anointing at Bethany

[6]And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, [7]a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table.* [8]But when His disciples saw *it,* they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? [9]For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the* poor."

[10]But when Jesus was aware of *it,* He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. [11]For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. [12]For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. [13]Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

[14]Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests [15]and said,

26:3 [a]NU-Text omits *the scribes.*

for air all the way home after we'd been shopping together, because I tried them all. A good day of shopping and perfume testing could force the family into the next room when we got home. But even the most expensive perfume faded and was gone.

There is, however, a type of fragrance that does not fade—the most desirable kind. It is the fragrance of Mary—the fragrance that wafts down to us through twenty centuries. Her love for Jesus was so pure, so all-consuming, that she poured out upon him perfumed ointment that was worth about a year's wages. Her act of love makes our love stories seem paltry by comparison. She was seeking nothing; she was showing her love. If, in the living, our lives can have something of Mary's fragrance about them, they surely will please Him whom we love.

Mary's fragrance also answers the two basic questions about perfume. It will smell good on everybody, and it will last.

"What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. [16]So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples

[17]Now on the first *day of the Feast* of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

[18]And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples." '"

[19]So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

[20]When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. [21]Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

[22]And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

[23]He answered and said, "He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. [24]The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

[25]Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?"

He said to him, "You have said it."

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper

[26]And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed[a] and broke *it,* and gave *it* to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

[27]Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. [28]For this is My blood of the new[a] covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. [29]But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

[30]And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

[31]Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:

> *And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*
> MATTHEW 26:30

'I will strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'[a]

[32]But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

[33]Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

[34]Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

[35]Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"

And so said all the disciples.

The Prayer in the Garden

[36]Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." [37]And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. [38]Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

[39]He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will.*"

[40]Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? [41]Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

[42]Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless[a] I drink it, Your will be done." [43]And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

[44]So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. [45]Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are *you* still sleeping and

26:26 [a]M-Text reads *gave thanks for.* **26:28** [a]NU-Text omits *new.*
26:31 [a]Zechariah 13:7 **26:42** [a]NU-Text reads *if this may not pass away unless.*

resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

47And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." 49Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

50But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?"

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. 51And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

52But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish[a] by the sword. 53Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? 54How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

55In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. 56But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

57And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

59Now the chief priests, the elders,[a] and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, 60but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.[a] But at last two false witnesses[b] came forward 61and said, "This *fellow* said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

62And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?" 63But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

64Jesus said to him, "*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

65Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! 66What do you think?"

They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

67Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, 68saying, "Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly

69Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."

70But he denied it before *them* all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."

71And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, "This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"

73And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you."

74Then he began to curse and swear, *saying,* "I do not know the Man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. 75And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

26:52 [a]M-Text reads *die.* **26:59** [a]NU-Text omits *the elders.* **26:60** [a]NU-Text puts a comma after *but found none,* does not capitalize *Even,* and omits *they found none.* [b]NU-Text omits *false witnesses.*

Jesus Handed Over to Pontius Pilate

27 When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. 2 And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius[a] Pilate the governor.

Judas Hangs Himself

3 Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."

And they said, "What *is that* to us? You see *to it!*"

5 Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." 7 And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8 Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

9 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, *"And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced,* whom they of the children of Israel priced, 10 *and gave them for the potter's field, as the* LORD *directed me."*[a]

27:2 [a]NU-Text omits *Pontius*. **27:10** [a]Jeremiah 32:6–9



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. | MATTHEW 27:59, 60

Eden Methodist is a rural church situated in a wooded area between three small North Carolina towns. The exquisite rock exterior is still as beautiful and grand today as when it was built more than a century ago. As a child I thought that we surely had the most beautiful church in the world. A stone's throw northwest of the church is the cemetery where I, as a ten-year-old, attended my first Easter morning sunrise service with my family. My grandparents, my mother's parents, who passed away before I was born, are buried there. The memorial my mom had placed on her parents' grave, the wreaths and fresh-cut flowers glistening in the morning dew throughout that graveyard captured my attention. As our pastor began the service, my attention was drawn to the Biblical account of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. I believed the story, but at that age, I had little comprehension of the tremendous significance and power in the words he was speaking.

On my first visit to the Holy Land, our tour ended in Jerusalem, where we visited Calvary and the Garden tomb. I viewed Calvary, where Christ suffered the horrible, shameful crucifixion death for the sins of the world. About a stone's throw from Calvary is the tomb where Joseph of Arimathea laid the dead body of Christ and rolled a great stone to the entrance to

Jesus Faces Pilate

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor.
And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are
You the King of the Jews?"

Jesus said to him, "*It is as* you say." 12 And
while He was being accused by the chief
priests and elders, He answered nothing.

13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not
hear how many things they testify against
You?" 14 But He answered him not one word,
so that the governor marveled greatly.

Taking the Place of Barabbas

15 Now at the feast the governor was
accustomed to releasing to the multitude
one prisoner whom they wished. 16 And at
that time they had a notorious prisoner
called Barabbas.[a] 17 Therefore, when they
had gathered together, Pilate said to them,
"Whom do you want me to release to you?
Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"
18 For he knew that they had handed Him
over because of envy.

19 While he was sitting on the judgment
seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have
nothing to do with that just Man, for I have
suffered many things today in a dream
because of Him."

20 But the chief priests and elders per-
suaded the multitudes that they should ask
for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. 21 The gover-
nor answered and said to them, "Which of
the two do you want me to release to you?"

27:16 [a]NU-Text reads *Jesus Barabbas.*

the sepulcher (Matt. 27:60). As I watched the hustle and bustle that day so many years ago, I tried to imagine Jerusalem on Crucifixion day over two thousand years ago. Would I have been among the unbelievers? "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" is the question Jesus asks of every person. All sorts of answers have been given, but they sift down to the two that Jesus received from his disciples when He first asked the question. They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Jesus turned his question to them. Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:13–16). Ever since, there have been two replies. One says Jesus is a great and good man, the other that He is the divine Son of God. Matthew 27:54 states that the centurion who was at the Cross watching the Crucifixion of Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were done and declared, "Truly this was the Son of God!" In the midst of great unbelief, the apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15 that according to the Scriptures, Christ died for our sins. He was buried, and He was raised on the third day. He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, and then to five hundred at one time, most of whom were still alive at the time of Paul's writing. He appeared to James, then to all of the apostles and last of all, He was seen by Paul.

I go back to our cemetery several times each year. Now, both my father and mother, three brothers, a sister-in-law, and relatives are buried there. Recently we surrendered our oldest sister and a brother-in-law. I miss them all, but I sorrow not as those who have no hope. We have a living hope. If we have not experienced salvation, we merely report a speculation—instead of sharing, like Peter, a personal reality we know to be true.

Gospel Songs

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

MATTHEW 28:19, 20

ARABELLA KATHERINE Hankey was a woman who truly did love to tell the story of the gospel. While she was a teenager, Kate (as she was called by those who knew her) and her father, a wealthy London banker, became involved in a missions-focused group called the Clapham Sect, which was led by William Wilberforce. Kate began telling the story by teaching Sunday school for girls in her neighborhood. Soon, she was writing poems and tracts and organizing and leading Bible studies for factory girls, and eventually she went all the way to South Africa as a nurse, continuing to tell the story of Jesus' love. At thirty, she herself was seriously ill, but she never stopped telling the story. Kate made good use of her time recovering in bed—a whole year—by writing an impressive two-part poem. The first part, entitled "The Story Wanted," was later adapted into the well-loved children's hymn, "Tell Me the Old, Old Story." The second part of Hankey's poem, entitled "The Story Told," became the popular gospel song, "I Love to Tell the Story." Nearly 150 years ago, Kate obeyed Jesus' last instruction to His apostles to tell His story to the world, and she still does even today.



I Love to Tell the Story

Arabella K. Hankey, 1866

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love;
I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true,
It satisfies my longings as nothing else would do.

Refrain:
I love to tell the story,
'Twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and His love.

I love to tell the story, more wonderful it seems
Than all the golden fancies of all our golden dreams;
I love to tell the story, it did so much for me,
And that is just the reason I tell it now to thee.

Refrain

I love to tell the story, 'tis pleasant to repeat,
What seems each time I tell it more wonderfully sweet;
I love to tell the story, for some have never heard
The message of salvation from God's own holy Word.

Refrain

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest;
And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

Refrain

They said, "Barabbas!"

22Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

23Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

24When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person.[a] You see *to it.*"

25And all the people answered and said, "His blood *be* on us and on our children."

26Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

27Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. 28And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. 29When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. 31And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His *own* clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

The King on a Cross

32Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. 33And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, 34they gave Him sour[a] wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it,* He would not drink.

35Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots,[a] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

"They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots."[b]

36Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. 37And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

39And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads 40and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

41Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders,[a] said, 42"He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel,[a] let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.[b] 43He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

44Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

Jesus Dies on the Cross

45Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. 46And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*[a]

47Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that,* said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" 48Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

49The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

50And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

51Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, 52and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

54So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

27:24 [a]NU-Text omits *just.* **27:34** [a]NU-Text omits *sour.* **27:35** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the rest of this verse. [b]Psalm 22:18 **27:41** [a]M-Text reads *with the scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders.* **27:42** [a]NU-Text reads *He is the King of Israel!* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *we will believe in Him.* **27:46** [a]Psalm 22:1

[55]And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, [56]among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses,[a] and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

[57]Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. [58]This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. [59]When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, [60]and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. [61]And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

Pilate Sets a Guard

[62]On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, [63]saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' [64]Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night[a] and steal Him *away,* and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."

[65]Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make *it* as secure as you know how." [66]So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

He Is Risen

28 Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. [2]And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door,[a] and sat on it. [3]His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. [4]And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead *men.*

[5]But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. [6]He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. [7]And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

[8]So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

The Women Worship the Risen Lord

[9]And as they went to tell His disciples,[a] behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. [10]Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go *and* tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

The Soldiers Are Bribed

[11]Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. [12]When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, [13]saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.' [14]And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." [15]So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The Great Commission

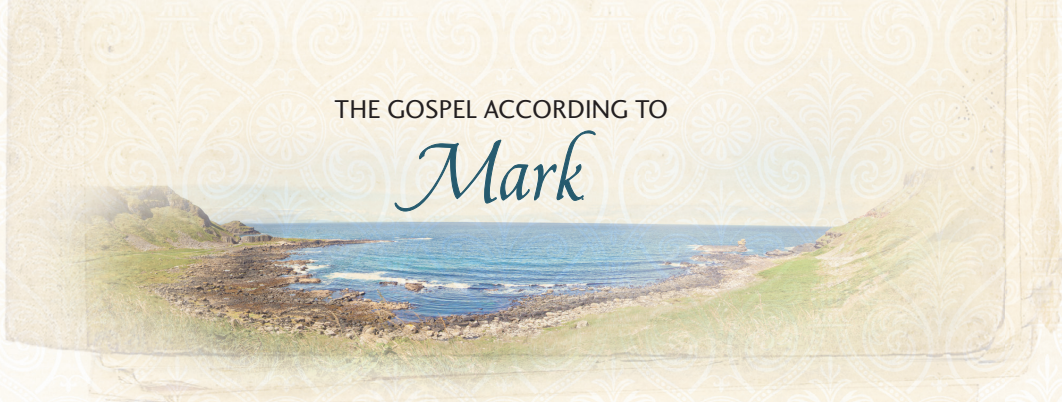
[16]Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. [17]When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

[18]And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. [19]Go therefore[a] and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20]teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.[a]

27:56 [a]NU-Text reads *Joseph.* **27:64** [a]NU-Text omits *by night.* **28:2** [a]NU-Text omits *from the door.* **28:9** [a]NU-Text omits the first clause of this verse. **28:19** [a]M-Text omits *therefore.* **28:20** [a]NU-Text omits *Amen.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

Mark



John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2As it is written in the Prophets:[a]

"Behold, I send My messenger before
Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before You."[b]
3 *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*
'Prepare the way of the LORD*;*
Make His paths straight.'"[a]

4John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

6Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

John Baptizes Jesus

9It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10And immediately, coming up from[a] the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. 11Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Satan Tempts Jesus

12Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. 13And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry

14Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom[a] of God, 15and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Four Fishermen Called as Disciples

16And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 17Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

19When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. 20And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

Jesus Casts Out an Unclean Spirit

21Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. 22And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

23Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24saying, "Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

25But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" 26And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves,

1:2 [a]NU-Text reads *Isaiah the prophet.* [b]Malachi 3:1 **1:3** [a]Isaiah 40:3
1:10 [a]NU-Text reads *out of.* **1:14** [a]NU-Text omits *of the kingdom.*

saying, "What is this? What new doctrine *is* this? For with authority[a] He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." [28]And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

Peter's Mother-in-Law Healed

[29]Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. [30]But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. [31]So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

Many Healed After Sabbath Sunset

[32]At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. [33]And the whole city was gathered together at the door. [34]Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

Preaching in Galilee

[35]Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. [36]And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him. [37]When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

[38]But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

[39]And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

[40]Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

[41]Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out *His* hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." [42]As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. [43]And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, [44]and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

[45]However, he went out and began to proclaim *it* freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic

2 And again He entered Capernaum after *some* days, and it was heard that He was in the house. [2]Immediately[a] many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive *them,* not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. [3]Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four *men.* [4]And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

[5]When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

[6]And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, [7]"Why does this *Man* speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

[8]But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? [9]Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, '*Your* sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? [10]But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, [11]"I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." [12]Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw *anything* like this!"

Matthew the Tax Collector

[13]Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. [14]As He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the tax

1:27 [a]NU-Text reads *What is this? A new doctrine with authority.*
2:2 [a]NU-Text omits *Immediately.*

He Touched Me

Shackled by a heavy burden,
'Neath a load of guilt and shame—
Then the hand of Jesus touched me,
And now I am no longer the same!

He touched me
Oh, He touched me!
And oh, the joy that floods my soul!
Something happened and now I know,
He touched me
And made me whole.

Since I met this blessed Savior,
Since He cleansed and made me whole,
I will never cease to praise Him;
I'll shout it while eternity rolls!

He touched me
Oh, He touched me!
And oh, the joy that floods my soul!
Something happened and now I know,
He touched me
And made me whole.



Then Jesus, moved with compassion,
stretched out His hand and touched him,
and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

MARK 1:41

Doug Oldhan's life had fallen apart: his wife, Laura, had taken the children and left; the popularity he once enjoyed as part of his father's ministry had changed to loneliness and despair. At one point Doug was so desperate and depressed that he had taken a loaded revolver and driven around, trying to get the nerve to kill himself. As he drove he was aware enough of the presence of the Lord to cry out loud to this God he thought he'd left behind, "If You're there, either give me something worth living for or the guts to pull this trigger." The changes were not immediate, but as Doug learned to be honest with God and himself, the Great Physician was able to heal Doug from the inside out. Little by little Doug traded a lifetime of bad habits for bits of wholeness.

As Doug Oldham continued to put his life together, he knew he needed to restore his relationship with his father, Dale. God worked there as well. Dale and Bill wrote "Something Worth Living For" about Doug's desperate prayer that night in the car. Before long Dale asked Doug to go with him and sing—and tell what God was doing in his marriage—at a series of revivals Dale had scheduled. Doug in turn asked if Bill would play piano for the services and for Doug. Doug was singing many of the new songs Bill and I had written, such as "Lovest Thou Me?" "In the Upper Room," "Have You Had a Gethsemane?" "Something Worth Living For," and Bill's earlier song "I've Been to Calvary," which had been recorded by the Speer Family. Bill and I decided that agreeing to play for Doug would help Doug—and our songs.

After one of those services, on a Saturday night in Huntington, Indiana, Bill called me to say that God was truly up to something in the meeting and in Doug. The spirit of the meeting had

been unusually warm and sweet. The Oldhams had noticed the same thing and, driving home that night, the three men talked about what had happened in the service, how people were so visibly touched and changed by the Spirit.

"Bill," Dr. Dale said, "there's something about the word *touch*. To think that the awesome God could touch our lives is a wonderful thing. You should write a song that says, 'He touched me; oh, He touched me.'" The next morning, before church, Bill played on the piano the melody that had been going through his head all night. I heard him singing, "He touched me; Oh, He touched me, and oh, the joy that floods my soul. . . ." It was a beautiful, simple melody with passion and emotion.

Soon Bill called me to come into the little back room where we had the piano in the small house we'd rented from Bill's parents. He had scribbled down the lyrics to two verses and a chorus. "See what you think," he said, singing through what he'd written:

Shackled by a heavy burden,
'Neath a load of guilt and shame—
Then the hand of Jesus touched me,
And now I am no longer the same!

I suggested he change the line "Now I am no longer the same." "It could be stronger, I think; more specific," I said.

He acknowledged my suggestion, then went on to sing the second verse. I thought that verse was good as it was—direct and innocent, filled with gratitude, as we really are when we become new in Christ Jesus—children again—yet aware of where we've been. Fortunately, Bill did not take my advice about the last line of the first verse. He kept it as it was. In fact, nothing changed. The whole song remained exactly as it first came to him.

Later that very day, Bill called Doug and sang it for him. By the next weekend Doug was performing it. It was his story. It was our story. And it has turned out to be everybody's story. The line I had objected to has probably been the secret to the song's great success, because each of us is able to read our own specific circumstances into that line: no matter what we've been, when we are touched by God we can honestly say, "Now I'm no longer the same!"

Doug was the first person to record "He Touched Me" as well as "Something Worth Living For" and "Thanks to Calvary (I Don't Live Here Anymore)." He sang them all over the country as God continued the work of restoring his life and his family.

"He Touched Me" has been recorded more than any other song we have written—by artists such as The Imperials, George Beverly Shea, Kate Smith, Jimmy Durante, and Elvis Presley. It has been translated into dozens of languages and sung around the world. Bill still likes to remind me that this is one song he wrote all by himself, and I still cringe a little when I think that we could have lost its most powerful line . . . had he listened to me.



office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

15Now it happened, as He was dining in *Levi's* house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. 16And when the scribes and[a] Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How *is it* that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?"

17When Jesus heard *it,* He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."[a]

Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting

18The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

19And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. 20But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. 21No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. 22And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

23Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. 24And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

25But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: 26how he went into the house of God *in the days* of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?"

27And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

Healing on the Sabbath

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. 3And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." 4Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. 5And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.[a] 6Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

A Great Multitude Follows Jesus

7But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea 8and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. 9So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. 10For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. 11And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." 12But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

The Twelve Apostles

13And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. 14Then He appointed twelve,[a] that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, 15and to have power to heal sicknesses and[a]

2:16 [a]NU-Text reads *of the.* **2:17** [a]NU-Text omits *to repentance.*
3:5 [a]NU-Text omits *as whole as the other.* **3:14** [a]NU-Text adds *whom He also named apostles.* **3:15** [a]NU-Text omits *to heal sicknesses and.*

to cast out demons: 16Simon,[a] to whom He gave the name Peter; 17James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; 19and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

A House Divided Cannot Stand

20Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

22And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."

23So He called them to *Himself* and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.

The Unpardonable Sin

28"Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"— 30because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers Send for Him

31Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. 32And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers[a] are outside seeking You."

33But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" 34And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 35For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

The Parable of the Sower

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. 2Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:

3"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air[a] came and devoured it. 5Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. 6But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. 7And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. 8But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

9And He said to them,[a] "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Purpose of Parables

10But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. 11And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, 12so that

'Seeing they may see and not perceive,
And hearing they may hear and not
understand;
Lest they should turn,
And their sins be forgiven them.'"[a]

The Parable of the Sower Explained

13And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? 14The sower sows the word. 15And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and

3:16 [a]NU-Text reads *and He appointed the twelve: Simon. . . .* **3:32** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *and Your sisters.* **4:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of the air.* **4:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them.* **4:12** [a]Isaiah 6:9, 10

How Like Jesus

GLORIA GAITHER

How like Jesus to speak to the storm;
How like us to think we should build
better boats,
Take more sailing lessons,
Store up more provisions.
How like Jesus to speak to the storm.
We are all a little nervous in America;
Somebody messed with our boat,
And most of us are figuring out how
much stuff
We should store up.
How many sailing lessons we ought
to take?
How much ammunition should we store
under the seats for protection
from pirates?
How many life jackets?
Can I remind you who you are?
You are children of the King, and He
speaks to the storm.
Now they can implode the twin towers
of the World Trade Center,
But they can't destroy our strong
tower of faith.
They can undermine our economy,
But they can't take away our riches in
Christ Jesus.
They can destroy our national systems
of transportation,
But they can't cause our reservation to
fly away to glory to be cancelled.
They can make us question our
national security,
But they can never destroy a peace
that passes all understanding.
And maybe you have felt bombarded
by information
And news, and voices in the media.
This week why don't you turn off the
TV, unplug your computer,
And listen to the still small voice
that says,
"My peace I give to you, not as the
world giveth, give I unto you.
Let not your heart be troubled, neither
let it be afraid."
This peace doesn't come from the
ship and the supplies;
It comes from the voice that stills
the storm,
And most of the storm is in us.
It was in us before the trade
tower incident,
And that's where the chaos always
comes from.
Once we get *that* storm settled,
No other storms can disrupt our lives.
Because life is eternal and life wins!
You hear me? Life wins!

takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. [16]These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; [17]and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. [18]Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, [19]and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20]But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Light Under a Basket

[21]Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? [22]For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. [23]If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

[24]Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. [25]For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

The Parable of the Growing Seed

[26]And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, [27]and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. [28]For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. [29]But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."



ERNIE HAASE • Homecoming Artist, *Ernie Haase and Signature Sound*, Formerly with *The Cathedral Quartet*

Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. | MARK 4:39

In the midst of the storm Jesus was found sleeping. Wow, can anyone say they sleep peacefully when their boat is rocking? I cannot; I do not sleep well when everything is fine, much less in the storms of life.

But I have found that the more I trust, the better I sleep. Peace is the gauge for us Christians to tell if we are truly trusting. We could make millions of dollars, but nothing can buy peace. Jesus wishes for us, His children, to live in peace. I did not say problem-free, but in peace while in the midst of the storm.

The reason Jesus slept was that He was tired. Are you tired? Then sleep in peace, knowing that the Master of the sea will awaken to your cries of faith and say, "Peace, be still" to whatever storm you are going through. The storms may not cease immediately, but you can know that He Himself is the peace in the midst of the storm.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

30 Then He said, "To what shall we liken
the kingdom of God? Or with what para-
ble shall we picture it? 31 *It is* like a mustard
seed which, when it is sown on the ground,
is smaller than all the seeds on earth; 32 but
when it is sown, it grows up and becomes
greater than all herbs, and shoots out large
branches, so that the birds of the air may
nest under its shade."

Jesus' Use of Parables

33 And with many such parables He
spoke the word to them as they were able to
hear *it*. 34 But without a parable He did not
speak to them. And when they were alone,
He explained all things to His disciples.

Wind and Wave Obey Jesus

35 On the same day, when evening had
come, He said to them, "Let us cross over
to the other side." 36 Now when they had
left the multitude, they took Him along in
the boat as He was. And other little boats
were also with Him. 37 And a great wind-
storm arose, and the waves beat into the
boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He
was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And
they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher,
do You not care that we are perishing?"

39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind,
and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And
the wind ceased and there was a great
calm. 40 But He said to them, "Why are
you so fearful? How *is it* that you have no
faith?"[a] 41 And they feared exceedingly, and
said to one another, "Who can this be, that
even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

5 Then they came to the other side of the
sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.[a]
2 And when He had come out of the boat,
immediately there met Him out of the
tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who
had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no
one could bind him,[a] not even with chains,
4 because he had often been bound with
shackles and chains. And the chains had
been pulled apart by him, and the shack-
les broken in pieces; neither could anyone
tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he
was in the mountains and in the tombs,
crying out and cutting himself with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran
and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out
with a loud voice and said, "What have I to
do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? I implore You by God that You do
not torment me."

8 For He said to him, "Come out of the
man, unclean spirit!" 9 Then He asked him,
"What *is* your name?"

And he answered, saying, "My name *is*
Legion; for we are many." 10 Also he begged
Him earnestly that He would not send
them out of the country.

11 Now a large herd of swine was feed-
ing there near the mountains. 12 So all the
demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to
the swine, that we may enter them." 13 And
at once Jesus[a] gave them permission. Then
the unclean spirits went out and entered
the swine (there were about two thousand);
and the herd ran violently down the steep
place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

14 So those who fed the swine fled, and
they told *it* in the city and in the country.
And they went out to see what it was that had
happened. 15 Then they came to Jesus, and
saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed
and had the legion, sitting and clothed and
in his right mind. And they were afraid. 16 And
those who saw it told them how it happened
to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and
about the swine. 17 Then they began to plead
with Him to depart from their region.

18 And when He got into the boat, he
who had been demon-possessed begged
Him that he might be with Him. 19 However,
Jesus did not permit him, but said to him,
"Go home to your friends, and tell them
what great things the Lord has done for
you, and how He has had compassion on
you." 20 And he departed and began to pro-
claim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done
for him; and all marveled.

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

21 Now when Jesus had crossed over
again by boat to the other side, a great mul-
titude gathered to Him; and He was by the
sea. 22 And behold, one of the rulers of the

4:40 [a]NU-Text reads *Have you still no faith?* **5:1** [a]NU-Text reads *Gerasenes.*
5:3 [a]NU-Text adds *anymore.* **5:13** [a]NU-Text reads *And He gave.*

Peace Be Still

I can feel a storm brewing,
The clouds rolling in—
Thunder rumbles beyond the hill.
The elements pause to gather their force;
The night grows unnaturally still.
Below, in the depths, the turbulence swells,
And deep in my heart swells a fear
That tears through my throat in a desperate cry—
"Oh, Lord, do You know that I'm here?"

He says, "Peace, peace be still!"
Lifts His hand . . . "Peace, be still."
And like a child, the winds obey Him,
When He says, "Peace, be still."

I know the old feeling:
I've been here before—
The same dark foreboding of fear.
When winds of the past churn up my life,
And the peace that I love disappears.
Then just when I feel the pressure so great
That my frame will be crushed by the force,
My Lord stands before me and faces the wind,
His voice echoes clear through the storm . . .

He says, "Peace, peace be still!"
Lifts His hand . . . "Peace, be still."
And like a child, my heart obeys Him,
When He says, "Peace, be still."

Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!"

MARK 4:39

In 1985 we took a group of about ninety people from across the country to Israel. Most of these people had never met until we arrived in the Holy Land. What drew them together and to this trip was a performance of a musical we had created, *He Started the Whole World Singing*. All of our traveling companions had sung this work in their local churches or community choirs and wanted to be a part of a combined choir that would perform it in the Holy Land, among the Jewish people who are and were so important to the story of the Messiah—the Messiah who brought the glory, stolen by Satan in the Garden of Eden, back into our lives.

The rehearsal was scheduled for the third evening of the trip, in a hotel in Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee. During the day, after our arrival in Tiberias, we sailed in a small ship out into the sea. In the center of the sea we stopped and turned off the motor. It was a beautiful clear day; the sea was like glass, silent except for the gentle lapping of the water against the boat. We heard the faint sounds of birds in trees on the far side.

One end of the Sea of Galilee is embraced by hills. In these hills is a cleft, and our guide explained that during storms, this cleft functioned like a tunnel, funneling the winds right onto the shallow waters. Storms, he said, came up quickly, and smooth waters like the ones we saw could turn rough and turbulent with little notice.

Our group talked about this—how these sudden storms were so much like our lives. We might be sailing smoothly on a peaceful sea until, with little warning, unexpected turbulence could churn up our days and threaten to topple our frail barks.

We took this opportunity to read together the account from Mark 4:35–41 of Jesus and His disciples in a boat, possibly similar to ours, on this very sea

after a day of seashore ministry. Jesus was exhausted, the special kind of tired that comes from giving of oneself to people and their deep needs. The ship had barely started to move out before Jesus pillowed his head and fell asleep in the stern of the ship, lulled by the rhythm of the waves.

As we read we noticed purple clouds gathering behind the hills, though the sun continued to glisten on the water and the sea was as tranquil as a contented child. We could imagine, now, how the wind could begin to blow behind the hills and then, intensified as it passed through the narrow corridor between the rocks, whip onto the sea. This far from shore, we could see how dangerous this situation might be, especially with no motor—only sails and oars to resist the force of the winds and waves.

When such a storm came up, Jesus was awakened by His terrified friends. He walked to the bow of the ship, stretched out His hands, palms out like a patrolman stopping traffic. "Shhh," He whispered, not to the disciples, but to the storm. "Peace, be still!" We read from Mark: "And the wind ceased and there was a great calm" (4:39).

That day on the Sea of Galilee we understood that the storms that blow unannounced through our very souls, intensified by the circumstances of our lives, could be stilled by His voice too.

We sat in that boat with ninety singers, among them Sandi Patty, Steve Green, and Larnelle Harris, but we couldn't find the right song to express exactly what we were experiencing. Someone mentioned "The Stranger of Galilee" and several other songs about water. But this experience deserved a song of its own. There in the sunshine of the silent sea we prayed together. And we sang songs of praise and thanksgiving. But the perfect song for this experience was yet to be written.

After many more unforgettable experiences in the land of our Savior, Bill and I went home. And we carried with us images that would make their way into many songs, one of those being "Peace Be Still." Whenever we sing it, we see the cleft in the tall hills and the sea that can change and threaten without notice. And we hear a voice that speaks with quiet authority to the chaos of our day, "Peace, be still."



synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23]and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live." [24]So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

[25]Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, [26]and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. [27]When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. [28]For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

[29]Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. [30]And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

[31]But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

[32]And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. [33]But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. [34]And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

[35]While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

[36]As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." [37]And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. [38]Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. [39]When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

[40]And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. [41]Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." [42]Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. And they were overcome with great amazement. [43]But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

6 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. [2]And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were astonished, saying, "Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3]Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

[4]But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." [5]Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them.* [6]And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Sending Out the Twelve

[7]And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8]He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts— [9]but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

[10]Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11]And whoever[a] will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them.[b] Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!"

[12]So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13]And they cast out

6:11 [a]NU-Text reads *whatever place.* [b]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them.*

John the Baptist Beheaded

[14]Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

[15]Others said, "It is Elijah."

And others said, "It is the Prophet, or[a] like one of the prophets."

[16]But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" [17]For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18]Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19]Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20]for Herod feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

[21]Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men*

6:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *or.*



SHERI EASTER • Homecoming Artist, *The Easters*

Do not be afraid; only believe. | MARK 5:36

In June of 2008, I met with my surgeon to have further testing on a lump in my breast that I had found myself after losing sixteen pounds. I had previously scheduled a mammogram and it came back clear, but I continued to be reminded of the lump until I made the appointment six months later. During the two-day waiting period for the test results, I felt a suffocating fear I had never before known. It was as though I was consumed by fear. Every reference in every sentence reminded me of my fear. Every commercial or every television program hinted at my concerns. Every thought whispered, "But what if it's cancer?"

I couldn't still the voices, so I prayed. My prayer was this exactly, "God, you have to give me something to get me through this weekend." I opened my Bible to Mark 5:36. The words in red were, "Do not be afraid; only believe." I cried and began a year-long process of clinging to these words.

On July 2, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. On July 6, I chose to have a mastectomy with lymph node removal. Two of the twenty lymph nodes also contained cancer, and it was recommended that I take six rounds of chemotherapy for prevention of recurrence. At every turn, I opted for the most aggressive treatment because I am a wife and mother of three wonderful children, the youngest of which was only two at the time of the diagnosis. I wanted to live. I wanted to fight. Still, every now and then, the fear would begin wrapping its tentacles of doubt around me. Every time, I quietly repeated, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

of Galilee. 22And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." 23He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

24So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?"

And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"

25Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

26And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. 27Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, 28brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. 29When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Feeding the Five Thousand

30Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. 31And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. 32So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

33But the multitudes[a] saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. 34And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. 35When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. 36Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread;[a] for they have nothing to eat."

37But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat."

And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?"

38But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."

And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish."

39Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. 40So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. 41And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. 42So they all ate and were filled. 43And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. 44Now those who had eaten the loaves were about[a] five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on the Sea

45Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. 46And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. 47Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. 48Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. 49And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; 50for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 51Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. 52For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Many Touch Him and Are Made Well

53When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. 54And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized

6:33 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *they.* **6:36** [a]NU-Text reads *something to eat* and omits the rest of this verse. **6:44** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *about.*

Him, [55]ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. [56]Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.

Defilement Comes from Within

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. [2]Now when[a] they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. [3]For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. [4]*When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

[5]Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

[6]He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

'This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
7 *And in vain they worship Me,*

7:2 [a]NU-Text omits *when* and *they found fault.*



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets." But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" | MARK 6:14–16

There was something that they recognized, these men of old, there was a quality about Jesus that they had encountered in those other few men. They could not name it, but they could recognize it. This Jesus was a living likeness of those disturbing uncommon prophets of the past.

When our third little girl was a tiny baby, her grandmother, Polly, laughed and cried over a certain mannerism of this little child. It was peculiar to only one other person she had ever known, and that was her father-in-law, the child's great-grandfather. He had been gone for many years and yet here was something that was peculiar to him, showing up in his great-grandchild. A living likeness, because of the family bloodline.

So these contemporaries of Jesus struggled with defining what it was about Him that arrested their hearts. We know the prophets were men chosen and used by God. We also know that Jesus was the Christ.

What seems like an impossible goal for the heart, but a worthy goal, is that we might have something about us that is a living likeness of Him.

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'[a]

[8]For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men[a] —the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

[9]He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. [10]For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*;[a] and, *'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'*[b] [11]But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), [12]then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, [13]making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14]When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: [15]There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. [16]If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"[a]

[17]When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. [18]So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, [19]because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?"[a] [20]And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. [21]For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22]thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. [23]All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

A Gentile Shows Her Faith

[24]From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon.[a] And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. [25]For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. [26]The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

[27]But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

[28]And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs."

[29]Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter."

[30]And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Jesus Heals a Deaf-Mute

[31]Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. [32]Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. [33]And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. [34]Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

[35]Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. [36]Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it.* [37]And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Feeding the Four Thousand

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, [2]"I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. [3]And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar."

[4]Then His disciples answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"

[5]He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?"

7:7 [a]Isaiah 29:13 **7:8** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **7:10** [a]Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16 [b]Exodus 21:17 **7:16** [a]NU-Text omits this verse. **7:19** [a]NU-Text ends quotation with *eliminated,* setting off the final clause as Mark's comment that Jesus has declared all foods clean. **7:24** [a]NU-Text omits *and Sidon.*

And they said, "Seven."

6So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them.* 8So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. 9Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, 10immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

The Pharisees Seek a Sign

11Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. 12But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation."

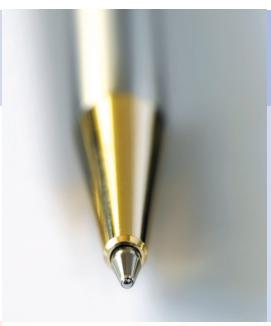
Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

13And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side. 14Now the disciples[a] had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. 15Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

16And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we have no bread."

17But Jesus, being aware of *it,* said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still[a] hardened? 18Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you

8:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *they.* **8:17** [a]NU-Text omits *still.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. | MARK 6:41

Jesus taught a very important principle to his disciples about how to feed the hungry. After they were convinced that they did not have the necessary resources to provide food for them, they were drawn into the truth of union with Jesus by this great miracle. Jesus was teaching them the necessity of continually returning to His feet for fresh supplies. When they came to Him with their empty baskets, He would fill the baskets and then they would distribute the provision. When they gave themselves empty, they were to return to the Lord Jesus again for another filling. By this process of giving themselves empty and returning to the Lord Jesus again and again, they were taught the secret of feeding the hungry multitudes. I am certain that each filling did not feel to them like it was sufficient for the hungry crowd, but it proved to be more than sufficient. If they tried to carry what they had handed out, they would have been crushed beneath the weight. As I look over my shoulder, and see what has been distributed because I began to learn to keep coming to Jesus for more, I can only worship!

not remember? [19]When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?"

They said to Him, "Twelve."

[20]"Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?"

And they said, "Seven."

[21]So He said to them, "How *is it* you do not understand?"

A Blind Man Healed at Bethsaida

[22]Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. [23]So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

[24]And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

[25]Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. [26]Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."[a]

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

[27]Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"

[28]So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some *say,* Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."

[29]He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."

[30]Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

[31]And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. [32]He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. [33]But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him

[34]When He had called the people to *Himself,* with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. [35]For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. [36]For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? [37]Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? [38]For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

9 And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount

[2]Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. [3]His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. [4]And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. [5]Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—[6]because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

[7]And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" [8]Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.

[9]Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. [10]So they kept this word to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant.

[11]And they asked Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

[12]Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores

8:26 [a]NU-Text reads *"Do not even go into the town."*

Go Ask

Don't ask me to explain to you how one could start again—
How hardened hearts could soften like a child.
Don't ask me how to reason out the mysteries of life,
Or how to face its problems with a smile.
Go ask the man who's found the way
Through tangled roads back home to stay
When all communications were destroyed
Go ask the child who's walking now
Who once was crippled, then somehow
Her useless legs were made to jump for joy.
Go ask the one whose burned-out mind
Has been restored—I think you'll find
The questions not important as before.
Don't ask me if He's good or bad;
I only know the guilt I had is gone,
And I can't tell you any more.

Don't ask me how to prove to you
Why I know God is there.
And how I know that He could care for you.
Don't ask me why Someone so great
Would choose to walk with me
And trade my broken life for one that's new.
Go ask the child who's got a dad
To love away the hurt he had
Before this Man called Jesus touched their lives.
Go ask the one whose fears have fled,
Whose churning heart was quieted
When Someone whispered "Peace" to all her strife.
Go ask the man to tell you more
Whose life was just a raging war
Inside himself until the Savior came.
I don't pretend to be so wise;
I only know He touched my eyes
And nothing else will ever be the same!

Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

MARK 8:25

There are no test tubes for proving the things of the Spirit. The proof is lived out in a person changed by the touch of God. Debate and logic, theorizing and philosophizing can help us sort out our thoughts about life and form them into axioms and rules to live by, but the laboratory for testing those theories is life—real days stacked into years of practicing.

Bill's father, who lived over nine decades, used to say, "People change, but not much." I'm coming to believe that in one way he's right. Only a force greater than ourselves can change the heart and reshape the human personality. And yet the tough circumstances of life can be tools, when used by the Master, to shape us into something far more beautiful than we could ever have dreamed.

Deep life changes wrought by God begin with a change in direction. Something comes to slow us down and stop us—a crisis, a tragedy, a failure, a gnawing dissatisfaction—something that makes us realize we are totally inadequate to run our lives, something that makes us admit that if we keep going the way we're going, we will self-destruct or live out our days in dull mediocrity.

This "stop down" makes us realize we are helpless to fix things, to change on our own. Whatever gets our attention and causes us to call out to God is a gift to our lives, no matter how hard the halt throws us at the time.

This turning around has been called by many names: *conversion, salvation, finding God*. Whatever it is named, it is necessary to bring us from living a pattern out of harmony with the God of the universe and into alignment with God's patterns and rhythms of love and grace.

After this turning point, change seems to be gradual, especially to the

person who is changing—being molded into the likeness of God's Son, but feeling less than adequate, less than holy, much less than perfect. Before this process, we may have felt arrogant and self-sufficient, but this is a humbling experience that paradoxically brings peace because we sense our lives are becoming more in harmony with the Holy Spirit who now lives in us. We come to realize the work is something He is doing in us, and our job is to surrender to that amazing work.

Bill and I have often talked about this process, not only in others but in ourselves and in each other. We've discussed it most when we are most discouraged with our own progress. But, as we noted in the song we thought we were writing for kids, *we are a promise* God made, an infinite possibility, and He will keep His promise to the world and to Himself; what He has begun in us He will be faithful to finish.

The story of the blind man healed by Jesus continues to surface in our writing because it's so refocusing. We can't always explain the theological intricacies of what God is doing or has done in us. We may not have chosen the route God brought us. I may not understand what God is up to in you—or you may not recognize what He's doing in me. Like the blind man, I make a simple claim: "All I know is that once I was blind and now I see." Sighted eyes are enough. Hearing ears are enough.

This simple song is made up of the stories of real people changed by a real God. If it has power, it is because there is power in the irrefutable proof of God at work in human lives: formerly crippled legs that now can walk; daddies that were gone—physically, spiritually, emotionally—now returned home and engaged in the lives of their children; minds that were fried by drugs, now restored and lucid. For proof? Go ask anyone who's being changed by the hand of Jesus. I am one who is, even as I write this, being changed into the image of my Master and Friend. I'm not what I want to be. I'm not what I'm going to be. But, thank God, I'm not what I was! (But that's another song!)



all things. And how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? 13But I say to you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him."

A Boy Is Healed

14And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. 15Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to *Him,* greeted Him. 16And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?"

17Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. 18And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

19He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." 20Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

21So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?"

And he said, "From childhood. 22And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

23Jesus said to him, "If you can believe,[a] all things *are* possible to him who believes."

24Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

25When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" 26Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." 27But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

28And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

29So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."[a]

Jesus Again Predicts His Death and Resurrection

30Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *it.* 31For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." 32But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

Who Is the Greatest?

33Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" 34But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the* greatest. 35And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." 36Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, 37"Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

Jesus Forbids Sectarianism

38Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."

39But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. 40For he who is not against us is on our[a] side. 41For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

Jesus Warns of Offenses

42"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown

9:23 [a]NU-Text reads *"'If You can!' All things. . . ."* **9:29** [a]NU-Text omits *and fasting.* **9:40** [a]M-Text reads *against you is on your side.*

into the sea. [43]If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— [44]where

'Their worm does not die
And the fire is not quenched.'[a]

[45]And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— [46]where

'Their worm does not die,
And the fire is not quenched.'[a]

[47]And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— [48]where

'Their worm does not die
And the fire is not quenched.'[a]

Tasteless Salt Is Worthless

[49]"For everyone will be seasoned with fire,[a] and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. [50]Salt *is* good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another."

Marriage and Divorce

10 Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.

[2]The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?" testing Him.

9:44 [a]NU-Text omits this verse. **9:46** [a]NU-Text omits the last clause of verse 45 and all of verse 46. **9:48** [a]Isaiah 66:24 **9:49** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. | MARK 8:32

Peter had been commended for receiving revelation from heaven. When Peter made his great confession of faith, he was reminded that his knowledge of Christ came from the Father in heaven and not from flesh and blood. Immediately after that revelation we read that Jesus spoke to them openly in plain and simple words, telling them what was about to take place in Jerusalem. Plain and simple words, even if they are from the lips of Jesus, cannot take the place of a heart-revelation of Christ. It is strange to read in this context that Peter resisted tooth and nail the plain and simple words of Jesus. He began to rebuke the Lord Jesus for speaking so plainly. There is a great lesson here for those who desire to be taught of God. It is not plain and simple words that we need; rather, it is a revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven. Plain and simple words may give me good theology, but to have a heart-knowledge of Jesus, I need a revelation from the Father in heaven.

3And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?"

4They said, "Moses permitted *a man* to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her.*"

5And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6But from the beginning of the creation, God *'made them male and female.'*[a] 7*'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,* 8*and the two shall become one flesh'*; [a] so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

10In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same *matter.* 11So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. 12And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Jesus Blesses Little Children

13Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them.* 14But when Jesus saw *it,* He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." 16And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.

Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler

17Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

18So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is,* God. 19You know the commandments: *'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,'* 'Do not defraud,' *'Honor your father and your mother.'*"[a]

20And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

21Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

22But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

With God All Things Are Possible

23Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" 24And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches[a] to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

27But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men *it is* impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

28Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."

29So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[a] or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. 31But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first."

Jesus a Third Time Predicts His Death and Resurrection

32Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: 33"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; 34and they will mock Him,

10:6 [a]Genesis 1:27; 5:2 **10:8** [a]Genesis 2:24 **10:19** [a]Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20 **10:24** [a]NU-Text omits *for those who trust in riches.* **10:29** [a]NU-Text omits *or wife.*

and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

Greatness Is Serving

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

39 They said to Him, "We are able."

So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared."

41 And when the ten heard *it,* they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did



BILL GAITHER

Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it. | MARK 10:15

Anyone who knows me knows that I have a great deal of respect for the facts. I believe wholeheartedly in critical thinking when it comes to our faith—not negative thinking, mind you—because it is dangerous to get swept away by every doctrine we hear or want to believe.

While naïveté is an enemy to solid faith, cynicism is an even greater threat because of the lie that comes with it. Cynicism tries to convince us that faith is foolish, that grace is frivolous, that love is too good to be true.

A question I hear all the time from folks who have watched the Homecoming family sing together is, "Do those folks *really* love each other as much as it appears they do on the Homecoming programs?"

I have to answer that question truthfully. And the truth is, this family's love quite possibly goes deeper than one might see from the outside. The early Homecoming gatherings found artists working elbow to elbow with the same people who had once been their rivals. Rather than remaining competitive and mean-spirited, those relationships were mended. And that love is very real and, honestly, miraculous.

not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus

[46]Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. [47]And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

[48]Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

[49]So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called.

Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

[50]And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

[51]So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

[52]Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

The Triumphal Entry

11 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage[a] and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; [2]and

11:1 [a]M-Text reads *Bethsphage.*

I say this to say, *Yes, there is a place for critical thought*. Do we need to be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove? Yes. But God is still God. He is the same God who created earth, and stars and solar systems, and the intricacies of our human bodies. He is the same God who parted seas and delivered His people from generations of bondage.

I must agree with my friend Tony Campolo. Maybe, just *maybe*, God is bigger than our little theories. Maybe, just maybe, God could intervene and make a world of difference in a hopeless situation. Maybe, just maybe, with forty-five seconds left in the game there is still a chance to get the ball into the end zone. Maybe, just maybe, that kid you've been worried about for so long will, at last, run to the real Source of life and will make you proud.

I believe cynicism is the opposite of humility and trust. When Jesus was dealing with his disciples who had lost sight of their real mission because of spiritual pride, wagering over which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of God, Jesus pointed them to a guileless child. His warning to the disciples was very severe, especially that their cynicism might disillusion some innocent "child" and cause him or her to lose their trust. I believe Jesus was talking not only about those young in age, but also those new in the faith.

I do not want to be naïve about the hard issues of life, but God save me from becoming a bitter old cynic. I pray that I can keep my mind sharp and deal with reality through a constructive, critical thought process. But God save me from becoming a hopeless cynic. Maybe, just maybe . . . maybe, just maybe . . . maybe, just maybe . . .

Gospel Songs

And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.

MARK 10:16

ON APRIL 30, 1868, Dr. W. H. Doane came into my house and said, "I have exactly forty minutes before my train leaves for Cincinnati. Here is a melody. Can you write words for it?" I replied that I would see what I could do. Then followed a space of twenty minutes during which I was wholly unconscious of all else except the work I was doing. At the end of that time I recited the words to "Safe in the Arms of Jesus." Mr. Doane copied them, and had time to catch his train.

Such is the explanation by prolific songwriter Fanny Crosby of how she came to write a song that would become one of the closest to her heart. The quickness with which she was able to whip up these lyrics is a testament not only to her amazing songwriting talents, but even more so to the closeness of her walk with Jesus. Crosby spent her life asking the Spirit to guide the words she would have written for her. She knew more than her share of pain and disappointment, but she also knew the unwavering faithfulness of the Lord and His goodness to those who call on Him. In 1858, Crosby married Van Alstynes, who was blind like her and a gifted organist, but a year later, they experienced deep grief. "Now I am going to tell you something that only my closest friends know," Crosby revealed in an interview near the end of her life. "I became a mother and knew a mother's love. God gave us a tender babe but the angels came down and took our infant up to God and to His throne."

Crosby and Alstynes mourned quietly, and ten years later, Dr. Doane arrived on Crosby's doorstep with his urgent request for a song. So she poured out the hope and longing that had been cultivated in her heart for herself and her baby: "Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast, There by His love o'ershaded, sweetly my soul shall rest."

Safe in the Arms of Jesus

Fanny Crosby, 1868

Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'ershaded, sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! 'tis the voice of angels, borne in a song to me.
Over the fields of glory, over the jasper sea.

Refrain:
Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast
There by His love o'ershaded, sweetly my soul shall rest.

Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe from corroding care,
Safe from the world's temptations, sin cannot harm me there.
Free from the blight of sorrow, free from my doubts and fears;
Only a few more trials, only a few more tears!

Refrain

Jesus, my heart's dear Refuge, Jesus has died for me;
Firm on the Rock of Ages, ever my trust shall be.
Here let me wait with patience, wait till the night is over;
Wait till I see the morning break on the golden shore.

Refrain



He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring *it*. 3And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."

4So they went their way, and found the[a] colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. 5But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"

6And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. 7Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. 8And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. 9Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna!
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'[a]
10 Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David
That comes in the name of the Lord![a]
Hosanna in the highest!"

11And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

The Fig Tree Withered

12Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again."

And His disciples heard *it*.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

15So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 16And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. 17Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, *'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'*?[a] But you have made it a *'den of thieves.'*"[b]

18And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. 19When evening had come, He went out of the city.

The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree

20Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

22So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them,* and you will have *them*.

Forgiveness and Prayer

25"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."[a]

Jesus' Authority Questioned

27Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. 28And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

29But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: 30The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."

31And they reasoned among themselves,

11:4 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *a*. **11:9** [a]Psalm 118:26 **11:10** [a]NU-Text omits *in the name of the Lord*. **11:17** [a]Isaiah 56:7 [b]Jeremiah 7:11
11:26 [a]NU-Text omits this verse.

saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 32But if we say, 'From men'"—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. 33So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know."

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers

12 Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around *it,* dug *a place for* the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 2Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. 3And they took *him* and beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. 4Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones,[a] wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully treated. 5And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. 6Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 7But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8So they took him and killed *him* and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

9"Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. 10Have you not even read this Scripture:

'The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.
11 *This was the* LORD*'s doing,*
And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"[a]

12And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.

The Pharisees: Is It Lawful to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

13Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in *His* words. 14When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? 15Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?"

But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see *it.*" 16So they brought *it.*

And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription *is* this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's."

17And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

And they marveled at Him.

The Sadducees: What About the Resurrection?

18Then *some* Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying: 19"Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves *his* wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 20Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring. 21And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise. 22So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. 23Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife."

24Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? 25For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *burning* bush *passage,* how God spoke to him, saying, *'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'*?[a] 27He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken."

The Scribes: Which Is the First Commandment of All?

28Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together,

12:4 [a]NU-Text omits *and at him they threw stones.* **12:11** [a]Psalm 118:22, 23
12:26 [a]Exodus 3:6, 15

perceiving[a] that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"

29Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments *is: 'Hear, O Israel, the* LORD *our God, the* LORD *is one.* 30*And you shall love the* LORD *your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'*[a] This *is* the first commandment.[b] 31And the second, like *it, is* this: *'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*[a] There is no other commandment greater than these."

32So the scribe said to Him, "Well *said,* Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. 33And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul,[a] and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

34Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

But after that no one dared question Him.

Jesus: How Can David Call His Descendant Lord?

35Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How *is it* that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? 36For David himself said by the Holy Spirit:

> *'The* LORD *said to my Lord,*
> *"Sit at My right hand,*
> *Till I make Your enemies Your*
> *footstool."*[a]

37Therefore David himself calls Him *'Lord'*; how is He *then* his Son?"

And the common people heard Him gladly.

Beware of the Scribes

38Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, *love* greetings in the marketplaces, 39the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, 40who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

The Widow's Two Mites

41Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much. 42Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites,[a] which make a quadrans. 43So He called His disciples to *Himself* and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

13 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*"

2And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

3Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 4"Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"

5And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 6For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He,*' and will deceive many. 7But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. 8For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles.[a] These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

9"But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought[a] before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand,

12:28 [a]NU-Text reads *seeing.* **12:30** [a]Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 [b]NU-Text omits this sentence. **12:31** [a]Leviticus 19:18 **12:33** [a]NU-Text omits *with all the soul.* **12:36** [a]Psalm 110:1 **12:42** [a]Greek *lepta,* very small copper coins worth a fraction of a penny **13:8** [a]NU-Text omits *and troubles.* **13:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *will stand.*

or premeditate[a] what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 13And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

The Great Tribulation

14"So when you see the *'abomination of desolation,'*[a] spoken of by Daniel the prophet,[b] standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. 16And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 17But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 18And pray that your flight may not be in winter. 19For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. 20And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

21"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or, 'Look, *He is* there!' do not believe it. 22For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 23But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

The Coming of the Son of Man

24"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

28"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 29So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it[a] is near—at the doors! 30Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. 31Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

32"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. 34*It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 35Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— 36lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

The Plot to Kill Jesus

14 After two days it was the Passover and *the Feast* of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put *Him* to death. 2But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."

13:11 [a]NU-Text omits *or premeditate.* **13:14** [a]Daniel 11:31; 12:11 [b]NU-Text omits *spoken of by Daniel the prophet.* **13:29** [a]Or *He*



The Anointing at Bethany

3 And being in Bethany at the house of
Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a
woman came having an alabaster flask of
very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke
the flask and poured *it* on His head. 4 But
there were some who were indignant among
themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant
oil wasted? 5 For it might have been sold for
more than three hundred denarii and given
to the poor." And they criticized her sharply.
6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do
you trouble her? She has done a good work
for Me. 7 For you have the poor with you
always, and whenever you wish you may do
them good; but Me you do not have always.
8 She has done what she could. She has
come beforehand to anoint My body for
burial. 9 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever
this gospel is preached in the whole world,
what this woman has done will also be told
as a memorial to her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve,
went to the chief priests to betray Him to
them. 11 And when they heard *it,* they were
glad, and promised to give him money.
So he sought how he might conveniently
betray Him.

Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples

12 Now on the first day of Unleavened
Bread, when they killed the Passover *lamb,*
His disciples said to Him, "Where do You
want us to go and prepare, that You may
eat the Passover?"
13 And He sent out two of His disciples and



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. | MARK 14:45, 46

Judas! Judas! Judas! What is the matter with you! When Judas made his deal with the chief priests, the kiss became the sign to be used for the identification of Jesus. When the mob came to arrest Jesus, before Judas could say a word or step forward to identify Jesus with the traitor's kiss, our Lord Jesus came forth and asked, "Whom are you seeking?" When they said that they were seeking Jesus, He said "I am He" (John 18:4, 5). Perhaps it was the "I am" that paralyzed everyone, but everyone fell to the ground. Roman soldiers were helpless! Those with clubs and swords were helpless! They were all rendered helpless! There is every reason to believe that Judas himself fell to the ground at the words of Jesus. Do you think, after this scene, that Jesus had to be identified? What greater evidence could have been given as to which one was Jesus? What did Judas do? He got up from the ground, went forward, and kissed the Lord Jesus. Jesus had removed the need for Judas to identify Him. Judas did not have to go through with the betrayal. What a revelation of the heart of Jesus as He reached out to Judas! Jesus bends over backwards to rescue us from ourselves.

said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. [14]Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' [15]Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished *and* prepared; there make ready for us."

[16]So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

[17]In the evening He came with the twelve. [18]Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me."

[19]And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "*Is* it I?" And another *said*, "*Is* it I?"[a]

[20]He answered and said to them, "*It is* one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish. [21]The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper

[22]And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, "Take, eat;[a] this is My body."

[23]Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. [24]And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new[a] covenant, which is shed for many. [25]Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

[26]And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
MARK 14:26

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

[27]Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night,[a] for it is written:

'I will strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep will be scattered.'[b]

[28]"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

[29]Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will* not *be*."

[30]Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, *even* this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."

[31]But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"

And they all said likewise.

The Prayer in the Garden

[32]Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." [33]And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. [34]Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch."

[35]He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. [36]And He said, "Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*."

[37]Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? [38]Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

[39]Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. [40]And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

[41]Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. [42]Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

[43]And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. [44]Now His betrayer had

14:19 [a]NU-Text omits this sentence. **14:22** [a]NU-Text omits *eat*.
14:24 [a]NU-Text omits *new*. **14:27** [a]NU-Text omits *because of Me this night*.
[b]Zechariah 13:7

And they clothed Him with purple;
and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it
on His head, and began to salute Him,
"Hail, King of the Jews!"

MARK 15:17, 18

We can never overestimate the lengths Christ traveled to save us from our sins. From His throne in heaven to a Cross at Golgotha, He humbled Himself to be the least of men, despised, spat on, and mocked by Roman soldiers, His flesh ripped to shreds. The severity of His degredation—the Son of the Most High God made out to be a liar and a criminal—can be matched only by the depth of His love. This great sacrifice is praised in the hymn "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded." It was originally part of the Latin Passion poem *Salve Mundi Salute,* which is now commonly attributed to either the monk Bernard of Clairvaux or the Medieval poet Arnulf of Louvain. The poem actually consists of seven parts, each describing a different part of Christ's body (feet, sides, breast, knees, hands, heart, and head) and also correlates to one of the seven days of Holy Week.

The long poem was translated into German by Lutheran hymnist Paul Gerhardt in 1656, and then into English by Anglican vicar John Gambold in 1752. Gambold translated only the final section, which focuses on Christ's head and turned it into a hymn that began, "O head so full of bruises." Then in 1830, the American Presbyterian pastor James Waddel Alexander translated the hymn to begin, "Oh sacred head, now wounded," and this version caught on. The song itself articulates just how inexpressible His act of salvation truly is and just how incapable we are of ever fully expressing our gratitude: "What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend, for this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end? O make me Thine forever, and should I fainting be, Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to Thee."

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Translated by James W. Alexander | 1830

1. O sacred Head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, Thine only crown;
O sacred Head, what glory, what bliss till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call Thee mine.

2. What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered, was all for sinners' gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression, but Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor, vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

3. What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever, and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to Thee.

given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead *Him* away safely."

45As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

46Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. 47And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? 49I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

50Then they all forsook Him and fled.

A Young Man Flees Naked

51Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body.* And the young men laid hold of him, 52and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

53And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. 54But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.

55Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

57Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58"We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" 59But not even then did their testimony agree.

60And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?" 61But He kept silent and answered nothing.

Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

62Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

63Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?"

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

65Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.[a]

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps

66Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. 67And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."

68But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.

69And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is *one* of them." 70But he denied it again.

And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are *one* of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows *it*."[a]

71Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"

72A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

Jesus Faces Pilate

15 Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led *Him* away, and delivered *Him* to Pilate. 2Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

He answered and said to him, "*It is as* you say."

3And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. 4Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do

14:65 [a]NU-Text reads *received Him with slaps.* **14:70** [a]NU-Text omits *and your speech shows it.*

You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!"[a] [5]But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.

Taking the Place of Barabbas

[6]Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. [7]And there was one named Barabbas, *who was* chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. [8]Then the multitude, crying aloud,[a] began to ask *him to do* just as he had always done for them. [9]But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" [10]For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

[11]But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. [12]Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?"

[13]So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

[14]Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

[15]So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him,* to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

[16]Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. [17]And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His *head,* [18]and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" [19]Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. [20]And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

The King on a Cross

[21]Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. [22]And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. [23]Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it.* [24]And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them *to determine* what every man should take.

[25]Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. [26]And the inscription of His accusation was written above:

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

[27]With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. [28]So the Scripture was fulfilled[a] which says, *"And He was numbered with the transgressors."*[b]

[29]And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! *You* who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, [30]save Yourself, and come down from the cross!"

[31]Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. [32]Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe."[a]

Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.

Jesus Dies on the Cross

[33]Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. [34]And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*[a]

[35]Some of those who stood by, when they heard *that,* said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" [36]Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down."

[37]And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

[38]Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. [39]So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last,[a] he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

15:4 [a]NU-Text reads *of which they accuse You.* **15:8** [a]NU-Text reads *going up.* **15:28** [a]Isaiah 53:12 [b]NU-Text omits this verse. **15:32** [a]M-Text reads *believe Him.* **15:34** [a]Psalm 22:1 **15:39** [a]NU-Text reads *that He thus breathed His last.*

40There were also women looking on from
afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene,
Mary the mother of James the Less and of
Joses, and Salome, 41who also followed Him
and ministered to Him when He was in
Galilee, and many other women who came
up with Him to Jerusalem.

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

42Now when evening had come, because
it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day
before the Sabbath, 43Joseph of Arimathea,
a prominent council member, who was him-
self waiting for the kingdom of God, coming
and taking courage, went in to Pilate and
asked for the body of Jesus. 44Pilate marveled
that He was already dead; and summoning
the centurion, he asked him if He had been
dead for some time. 45So when he found out
from the centurion, he granted the body to
Joseph. 46Then he bought fine linen, took
Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen.
And he laid Him in a tomb which had been
hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone
against the door of the tomb. 47And Mary
Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses
observed where He was laid.

He Is Risen

16 Now when the Sabbath was past,
Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of
James, and Salome bought spices, that they
might come and anoint Him. 2Very early in
the morning, on the first *day* of the week,
they came to the tomb when the sun had
risen. 3And they said among themselves,
"Who will roll away the stone from the door
of the tomb for us?" 4But when they looked
up, they saw that the stone had been rolled
away—for it was very large. 5And entering
the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in
a long white robe sitting on the right side;
and they were alarmed.

6But he said to them, "Do not be
alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who
was crucified. He is risen! He is not here.
See the place where they laid Him. 7But go,
tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is
going before you into Galilee; there you
will see Him, as He said to you."

8So they went out quickly[a] and fled
from the tomb, for they trembled and were
amazed. And they said nothing to anyone,
for they were afraid.

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

9Now when *He* rose early on the first
day of the week, He appeared first to Mary
Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven
demons. 10She went and told those who had
been with Him, as they mourned and wept.
11And when they heard that He was alive and
had been seen by her, they did not believe.

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

12After that, He appeared in another
form to two of them as they walked and
went into the country. 13And they went and
told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe
them either.

The Great Commission

14Later He appeared to the eleven as they
sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbe-
lief and hardness of heart, because they did
not believe those who had seen Him after
He had risen. 15And He said to them, "Go
into all the world and preach the gospel
to every creature. 16He who believes and
is baptized will be saved; but he who does
not believe will be condemned. 17And these
signs will follow those who believe: In My
name they will cast out demons; they will
speak with new tongues; 18they[a] will take up
serpents; and if they drink anything deadly,
it will by no means hurt them; they will lay
hands on the sick, and they will recover."

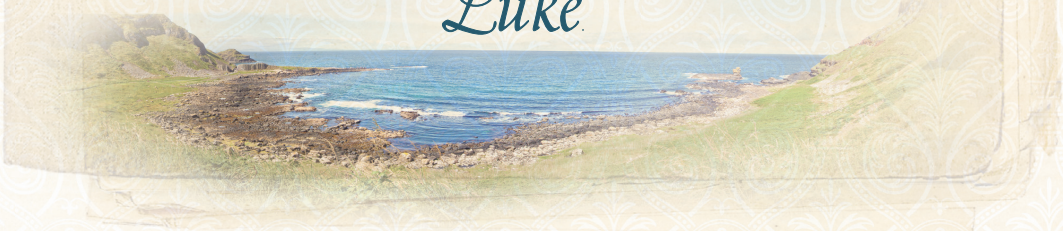
Christ Ascends to God's Right Hand

19So then, after the Lord had spoken to
them, He was received up into heaven, and
sat down at the right hand of God. 20And
they went out and preached everywhere,
the Lord working with *them* and confirm-
ing the word through the accompanying
signs. Amen.[a]

16:8 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *quickly.* **16:18** [a]NU-Text reads *and in their hands they will.* **16:20** [a]Verses 9–20 are bracketed in NU-Text as not original. They are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other manuscripts of Mark contain them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

Luke



Dedication to Theophilus

1 Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to
set in order a narrative of those things
which have been fulfilled[a] among us, [2]just as
those who from the beginning were eyewit-
nesses and ministers of the word delivered
them to us, [3]it seemed good to me also, hav-
ing had perfect understanding of all things
from the very first, to write to you an orderly
account, most excellent Theophilus, [4]that
you may know the certainty of those things
in which you were instructed.

John's Birth Announced to Zacharias

[5]There was in the days of Herod, the
king of Judea, a certain priest named
Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His
wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and
her name *was* Elizabeth. [6]And they were
both righteous before God, walking in all
the commandments and ordinances of the
Lord blameless. [7]But they had no child,
because Elizabeth was barren, and they
were both well advanced in years.

[8]So it was, that while he was serving
as priest before God in the order of his
division, [9]according to the custom of the
priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense
when he went into the temple of the Lord.
[10]And the whole multitude of the people
was praying outside at the hour of incense.
[11]Then an angel of the Lord appeared to
him, standing on the right side of the altar
of incense. [12]And when Zacharias saw *him,*
he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

[13]But the angel said to him, "Do not be
afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard;
and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son,
and you shall call his name John. [14]And you
will have joy and gladness, and many will
rejoice at his birth. [15]For he will be great
in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink
neither wine nor strong drink. He will also
be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his
mother's womb. [16]And he will turn many of
the children of Israel to the Lord their God.
[17]He will also go before Him in the spirit
and power of Elijah, *'to turn the hearts of
the fathers to the children,'*[a] and the dis-
obedient to the wisdom of the just, to make
ready a people prepared for the Lord."

[18]And Zacharias said to the angel, "How
shall I know this? For I am an old man, and
my wife is well advanced in years."

[19]And the angel answered and said to
him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the pres-
ence of God, and was sent to speak to you
and bring you these glad tidings. [20]But
behold, you will be mute and not able to
speak until the day these things take place,
because you did not believe my words
which will be fulfilled in their own time."

[21]And the people waited for Zacharias,
and marveled that he lingered so long in the
temple. [22]But when he came out, he could
not speak to them; and they perceived that
he had seen a vision in the temple, for he
beckoned to them and remained speechless.

[23]So it was, as soon as the days of his ser-
vice were completed, that he departed to his
own house. [24]Now after those days his wife
Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five
months, saying, [25]"Thus the Lord has dealt
with me, in the days when He looked on *me,*
to take away my reproach among people."

Christ's Birth Announced to Mary

[26]Now in the sixth month the angel
Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee
named Nazareth, [27]to a virgin betrothed
to a man whose name was Joseph, of the
house of David. The virgin's name *was* Mary.
[28]And having come in, the angel said to her,
"Rejoice, highly favored *one,* the Lord *is*
with you; blessed *are* you among women!"[a]

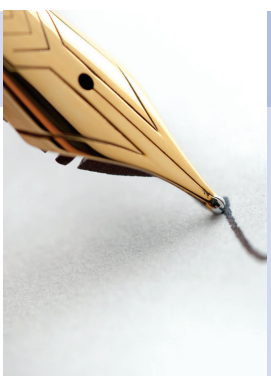
1:1 [a]Or *are most surely believed* **1:17** [a]Malachi 4:5, 6 **1:28** [a]NU-Text omits *blessed are you among women.*

29 But when she saw *him,*[a] she was troubled at his saying, and considered what
manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the
angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God. 31 And
behold, you will conceive in your womb
and bring forth a Son, and shall call His
name Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be
called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord
God will give Him the throne of His father
David. 33 And He will reign over the house
of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there
will be no end."
34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How
can this be, since I do not know a man?"
35 And the angel answered and said to
her, "*The* Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Highest will over-
shadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One
who is to be born will be called the Son
of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your rela-
tive has also conceived a son in her old
age; and this is now the sixth month for
her who was called barren. 37 For with God
nothing will be impossible."
38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidser-
vant of the Lord! Let it be to me according
to your word." And the angel departed
from her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

39 Now Mary arose in those days and
went into the hill country with haste, to
a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house
of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And
it happened, when Elizabeth heard the
greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in

1:29 [a]NU-Text omits *when she saw him.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." | LUKE 1:18

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" | LUKE 1:34

It seems like Zacharias and Mary said pretty much the same thing. Both inquired of the angel how such an impossible thing could take place. Zacharias wanted to know how it was possible for two old people to have a child; Mary wanted to know how it was possible for a virgin girl to mother a child. Although they were very similar questions, Zacharias was judged for unbelief while Mary was honored for faith. God sees the heart. He knew Zacharias's question was rooted in unbelief; He knew Mary's question was rooted in faith. Zacharias asked a *questioning* question; Mary asked an *inquisitive* question. The tone of Zacharias's question was "How can it be? It is impossible!" The tone of Mary's question was "How can it be? How are you going to accomplish this impossible thing through a virgin womb?" God loves inquisitive questions that are rooted in faith. God is displeased with *questioning* questions that are rooted in doubt. God always answers the question of the heart. We may be fooled trying to discern which question is rooted in doubt and which in faith, but He is not!

her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! 43But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

The Song of Mary

46And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.
49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me,
And holy *is* His name.
50 And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.
51 He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts.
52 He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones,
And exalted *the* lowly.
53 He has filled *the* hungry with good things,
And *the* rich He has sent away empty.
54 He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of *His* mercy,
55 As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever."

56And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

Birth of John the Baptist

57Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. 58When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

Circumcision of John the Baptist

59So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. 60His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

61But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." 62So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.

63And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled. 64Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue *loosed,* and he spoke, praising God. 65Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. 66And all those who heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Zacharias' Prophecy

67Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

68 "Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited and redeemed His people,
69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of His servant David,
70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,
Who *have been* since the world began,
71 That we should be saved from our enemies
And from the hand of all who hate us,
72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers
And to remember His holy covenant,
73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:
74 To grant us that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
Might serve Him without fear,
75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;

Blessed is she who believed,
for there will be a fulfillment
of those things which were
told her from the Lord.
LUKE 1:45

Does God still speak? When He tells us things, can we believe Him? No matter how *long* it seems in our earth time—long to us, but a moment to Him—can we wait with confidence for the fulfillment?

I think of the many layers of answers to that question. There is immediate fulfillment, the fulfillment of obedience, of unloading responsibility from our shoulders to His. There is the fulfillment in process, the small confirmations of His trustworthiness, even though this ultimate fulfillment is unseen. The final fulfillment we can only imagine. We will not see it yet. But when it comes we can be sure it will be better than we can pray for now, shot through with glory and eternity. Consider Mary, "she who believed," for the fulfillment of her believing is still accumulating. Only eternity will open her eyes to the magnitude of her obedient trust.



For you will go before the face of the
Lord to prepare His ways,
77 To give knowledge of salvation to His
people
By the remission of their sins,
78 Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Dayspring from on
high has visited[a] us;
79 To give light to those who sit in
darkness and the shadow of death,
To guide our feet into the way of peace."

80 So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

Christ Born of Mary

2 And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife,[a] who was with child. 6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Glory in the Highest

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold,[a] an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

1:78 [a]NU-Text reads *shall visit.* **2:5** [a]NU-Text omits *wife.* **2:9** [a]NU-Text omits *behold.*

13 And suddenly there was with the angel
a multitude of the heavenly host praising
God and saying:

14 "Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward
men!"[a]

15 So it was, when the angels had gone
away from them into heaven, that the shep-
herds said to one another, "Let us now go to
Bethlehem and see this thing that has come
to pass, which the Lord has made known to
us." 16 And they came with haste and found
Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a
manger. 17 Now when they had seen *Him*,
they made widely[a] known the saying which
was told them concerning this Child. 18 And
all those who heard *it* marveled at those
things which were told them by the shep-
herds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and
pondered *them* in her heart. 20 Then the
shepherds returned, glorifying and praising
God for all the things that they had heard
and seen, as it was told them.

Circumcision of Jesus

21 And when eight days were completed
for the circumcision of the Child,[a] His name
was called Jesus, the name given by the angel
before He was conceived in the womb.

Jesus Presented in the Temple

22 Now when the days of her purifica-
tion according to the law of Moses were
completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem
to present *Him* to the Lord 23 (as it is writ-
ten in the law of the Lord, *"Every male who
opens the womb shall be called holy to the
Lord"*),[a] 24 and to offer a sacrifice according
to what is said in the law of the Lord, *"A
pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."*[a]

Simeon Sees God's Salvation

25 And behold, there was a man in
Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this
man *was* just and devout, waiting for the
Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit
was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed
to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not
see death before he had seen the Lord's
Christ. 27 So he came by the Spirit into the
temple. And when the parents brought in
the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to
the custom of the law, 28 he took Him up in
his arms and blessed God and said:

29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant
depart in peace,
According to Your word;
30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation
31 Which You have prepared before the
face of all peoples,
32 A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel."

33 And Joseph and His mother[a] marveled
at those things which were spoken of Him.
34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to
Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is
destined for the fall and rising of many in
Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken
against 35 (yes, a sword will pierce through
your own soul also), that the thoughts of
many hearts may be revealed."

Anna Bears Witness to the Redeemer

36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophet-
ess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of
Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived
with a husband seven years from her virgin-
ity; 37 and this woman *was* a widow of about
eighty-four years,[a] who did not depart from
the temple, but served *God* with fastings
and prayers night and day. 38 And coming in
that instant she gave thanks to the Lord,[a]
and spoke of Him to all those who looked
for redemption in Jerusalem.

The Family Returns to Nazareth

39 So when they had performed all
things according to the law of the Lord,
they returned to Galilee, to their *own*
city, Nazareth. 40 And the Child grew and
became strong in spirit,[a] filled with wis-
dom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars

41 His parents went to Jerusalem every
year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And
when He was twelve years old, they went up
to Jerusalem according to the custom of the

2:14 [a]NU-Text reads *toward men of goodwill.* **2:17** [a]NU-Text omits *widely.* **2:21** [a]NU-Text reads *for His circumcision.* **2:23** [a]Exodus 13:2, 12, 15 **2:24** [a]Leviticus 12:8 **2:33** [a]NU-Text reads *And His father and mother.* **2:37** [a]NU-Text reads *a widow until she was eighty-four.* **2:38** [a]NU-Text reads *to God.* **2:40** [a]NU-Text omits *in spirit.*

feast. [43]When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother[a] did not know *it;* [44]but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. [45]So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. [46]Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. [47]And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. [48]So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

[49]And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" [50]But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

Jesus Advances in Wisdom and Favor

[51]Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. [52]And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, [2]while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests,[a] the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. [3]And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, [4]as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

2:43 [a]NU-Text reads *And His parents.* **3:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.*



MARK LOWRY • Homecoming Artist, the *Gaither Vocal Band*

And it came to pass . . . | LUKE 2:1

When people used to ask me my favorite scripture I always quoted the first part of this one (and really there are many more all through the Bible that start with this—sixty-eight occurrences, in fact). "And it came to pass" (Luke 2:1).

Have you ever noticed it always comes to *pass,* it never comes to stay? No matter what you're going through, it will pass. Good times? Enjoy them, they will pass. Bad times? Hold on, they will pass. This life is what I like to call "Boot Camp." This is where we get to learn to *walk by faith.* Without faith it's impossible to please God. And when we get home we won't need faith anymore. Our "faith will become sight," as Paul says. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." So I guess if we're going to please Him it will have to be here, where we walk by faith. So remember, whatever you're going through, it will pass!

"The voice of one crying in the
wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make His paths straight.
5 *Every valley shall be filled*
And every mountain and hill brought
low;
The crooked places shall be made
straight
And the rough ways smooth;
6 *And all flesh shall see the salvation*
of God.'"[a]

John Preaches to the People

7Then he said to the multitudes that
came out to be baptized by him, "Brood
of vipers! Who warned you to flee from
the wrath to come? 8Therefore bear fruits
worthy of repentance, and do not begin to
say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our*
father.' For I say to you that God is able to
raise up children to Abraham from these
stones. 9And even now the ax is laid to
the root of the trees. Therefore every tree
which does not bear good fruit is cut down
and thrown into the fire."

10So the people asked him, saying,
"What shall we do then?"

11He answered and said to them, "He
who has two tunics, let him give to him
who has none; and he who has food, let
him do likewise."

12Then tax collectors also came to be
baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what
shall we do?"

13And he said to them, "Collect no more
than what is appointed for you."

14Likewise the soldiers asked him, say-
ing, "And what shall we do?"

So he said to them, "Do not intimidate
anyone or accuse falsely, and be content
with your wages."

15Now as the people were in expectation,
and all reasoned in their hearts about John,
whether he was the Christ *or* not, 16John
answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize
you with water; but One mightier than I is
coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy
to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy
Spirit and fire. 17His winnowing fan *is* in His
hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His
threshing floor, and gather the wheat into
His barn; but the chaff He will burn with
unquenchable fire."

18And with many other exhortations he
preached to the people. 19But Herod the
tetrarch, being rebuked by him concern-
ing Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,[a]
and for all the evils which Herod had done,
20also added this, above all, that he shut
John up in prison.

John Baptizes Jesus

21When all the people were baptized,
it came to pass that Jesus also was bap-
tized; and while He prayed, the heaven was
opened. 22And the Holy Spirit descended
in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a
voice came from heaven which said, "You are
My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

23Now Jesus Himself began *His minis-*
try at about thirty years of age, being (as
was supposed) *the* son of Joseph, *the son* of
Heli, 24*the son* of Matthat,[a] *the son* of Levi,
the son of Melchi, *the son* of Janna, *the son*
of Joseph, 25*the son* of Mattathiah, *the son*
of Amos, *the son* of Nahum, *the son* of Esli,
the son of Naggai, 26*the son* of Maath, *the son*
of Mattathiah, *the son* of Semei, *the son* of
Joseph, *the son* of Judah, 27*the son* of Joannas,
the son of Rhesa, *the son* of Zerubbabel, *the*
son of Shealtiel, *the son* of Neri, 28*the son* of
Melchi, *the son* of Addi, *the son* of Cosam, *the*
son of Elmodam, *the son* of Er, 29*the son* of
Jose, *the son* of Eliezer, *the son* of Jorim, *the*
son of Matthat, *the son* of Levi, 30*the son* of
Simeon, *the son* of Judah, *the son* of Joseph,
the son of Jonan, *the son* of Eliakim, 31*the son* of
Melea, *the son* of Menan, *the son* of Mattathah,
the son of Nathan, *the son* of David, 32*the son*
of Jesse, *the son* of Obed, *the son* of Boaz,
the son of Salmon, *the son* of Nahshon, 33*the*
son of Amminadab, *the son* of Ram, *the son*
of Hezron, *the son* of Perez, *the son* of Judah,
34*the son* of Jacob, *the son* of Isaac, *the son* of
Abraham, *the son* of Terah, *the son* of Nahor,
35*the son* of Serug, *the son* of Reu, *the son* of
Peleg, *the son* of Eber, *the son* of Shelah, 36*the*
son of Cainan, *the son* of Arphaxad, *the son*
of Shem, *the son* of Noah, *the son* of Lamech,
37*the son* of Methuselah, *the son* of Enoch, *the*

3:6 [a]Isaiah 40:3–5 **3:19** [a]NU-Text reads *his brother's wife*. **3:24** [a]This and several other names in the genealogy are spelled somewhat differently in the NU-Text. Since the New King James Version uses the Old Testament spelling for persons mentioned in the New Testament, these variations, which come from the Greek, have not been footnoted.

Gospel Songs

Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Luke 2:17, 18

JOHN WESLEY Work, Jr., may not have originated the Negro spiritual "Go Tell It on the Mountain," but he can take credit for the fact that we still sing it every Christmas. As the son of a church choir director, Work grew up in Nashville loving music. Even though he earned his Master's in Latin and went on to teach ancient Latin and Greek, his first love continued to be music, and he went on to become the first African-American collector of Negro spirituals. This proved to be a daunting task for Work because the whole premise of the genre is that they were passed down orally, from plantation to plantation; very few were ever written down. But Work proved up to the challenge, publishing his first book, *New Jubilee Songs as Sung by the Fisk Jubilee Singers,* in 1901, and the second, *New Jubilee Songs and Folk Songs of the American Negro,* six years later. It was in this second volume that "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" first appeared. The original singers of the song fulfilled the same important task the angels gave the shepherds that first Christmas night outside of Bethlehem, proclaiming "that Jesus Christ is born!" And thanks to John Wesley Work, so can we.

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

John Wesley Work, Jr., 1907

Refrain:
Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching
Over silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.

Refrain

The shepherds feared and trembled,
When lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angels chorus
That hailed the Savior's birth.

Refrain

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born
And God sent us salvation
That blessèd Christmas morn.

Refrain

son of Jared, *the son* of Mahalalel, *the son* of Cainan, [38]*the son* of Enosh, *the son* of Seth, *the son* of Adam, *the son* of God.

Satan Tempts Jesus

4 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into[a] the wilderness, [2]being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

[3]And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

[4]But Jesus answered him, saying,[a] "It is written, *'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'*"[b]

[5]Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him[a] all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. [6]And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. [7]Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

[8]And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan![a] For[b] it is written, *'You shall worship the* LORD *your God, and Him only you shall serve.'*"[c]

[9]Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. [10]For it is written:

> *'He shall give His angels charge over you,*
> *To keep you,'*

[11]and,

> *'In their hands they shall bear you up,*
> *Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'*"[a]

4:1 [a]NU-Text reads *in*. **4:4** [a]Deuteronomy 8:3 [b]NU-Text omits *but by every word of God*. **4:5** [a]NU-Text reads *And taking Him up, he showed Him*. **4:8** [a]NU-Text omits *Get behind Me, Satan*. [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *For*. [c]Deuteronomy 6:13 **4:11** [a]Psalm 91:11, 12



SUSAN JACKSON • Homecoming Artist, *Karen Peck and New River*

So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. | LUKE 2:6, 7

When I was a child, I was in our church's Christmas play. I was so excited that they picked me to be an angel. I had to recite Luke chapter 2. Mom practiced the verses with me for weeks. When the night of the Christmas play finally arrived, I, dressed in a white flowing gown with white cardboard wings. I felt like I could conquer anything. I stood with confidence and boldness and recited Luke chapter 2. I knew that God was with me. With the innocence of my childhood, without any cynicism or doubt, I quoted those scriptures straight from my heart, clinging to every word. For a split second, even though the wings were made of cardboard, the thought ran across my mind that maybe I could fly. Eventually, I accepted Jesus as my Savior, and I will spend the rest of my life singing about Jesus as my Savior. To this day, Luke chapter 2 has stayed with me—in my mind and in my heart.

12 And Jesus answered and said to him,
"It has been said, *'You shall not tempt the*
LORD your God.'"[a]
13 Now when the devil had ended every
temptation, he departed from Him until an
opportune time.

Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry

14 Then Jesus returned in the power of
the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went
out through all the surrounding region.
15 And He taught in their synagogues,
being glorified by all.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

16 So He came to Nazareth, where He
had been brought up. And as His custom
was, He went into the synagogue on the
Sabbath day, and stood up to read. 17 And
He was handed the book of the prophet
Isaiah. And when He had opened the book,
He found the place where it was written:

18 *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,*
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the
brokenhearted,[a]
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
19 *To proclaim the acceptable year of*
the LORD."[a]

20 Then He closed the book, and gave *it*
back to the attendant and sat down. And
the eyes of all who were in the synagogue
were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say
to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled
in your hearing." 22 So all bore witness to
Him, and marveled at the gracious words
which proceeded out of His mouth. And
they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"
23 He said to them, "You will surely say
this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal your-
self! Whatever we have heard done in
Capernaum,[a] do also here in Your country.'"
24 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no
prophet is accepted in his own country.
25 But I tell you truly, many widows were in
Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven
was shut up three years and six months,
and there was a great famine throughout all
the land; 26 but to none of them was Elijah
sent except to Zarephath,[a] *in the region* of
Sidon, to a woman *who was* a widow. 27 And
many lepers were in Israel in the time of
Elisha the prophet, and none of them was
cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."
28 So all those in the synagogue, when
they heard these things, were filled with
wrath, 29 and rose up and thrust Him out of
the city; and they led Him to the brow of
the hill on which their city was built, that
they might throw Him down over the cliff.
30 Then passing through the midst of them,
He went His way.

Jesus Casts Out an Unclean Spirit

31 Then He went down to Capernaum, a
city of Galilee, and was teaching them on
the Sabbaths. 32 And they were astonished
at His teaching, for His word was with
authority. 33 Now in the synagogue there
was a man who had a spirit of an unclean
demon. And he cried out with a loud voice,
34 saying, "Let *us* alone! What have we to do
with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come
to destroy us? I know who You are—the
Holy One of God!"
35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be
quiet, and come out of him!" And when
the demon had thrown him in *their* midst,
it came out of him and did not hurt him.
36 Then they were all amazed and spoke
among themselves, saying, "What a word this
is! For with authority and power He com-
mands the unclean spirits, and they come
out." 37 And the report about Him went out
into every place in the surrounding region.

Peter's Mother-in-Law Healed

38 Now He arose from the synagogue
and entered Simon's house. But Simon's
wife's mother was sick with a high fever,
and they made request of Him concerning
her. 39 So He stood over her and rebuked
the fever, and it left her. And immediately
she arose and served them.

Many Healed After Sabbath Sunset

40 When the sun was setting, all those
who had any that were sick with various

4:12 [a]Deuteronomy 6:16 **4:18** [a]NU-Text omits *to heal the brokenhearted.*
4:19 [a]Isaiah 61:1, 2 **4:23** [a]Here and elsewhere the NU-Text spelling is *Capharnaum.* **4:26** [a]Greek *Sarepta*

diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. 41And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ,[a] the Son of God!"

And He, rebuking *them,* did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

Jesus Preaches in Galilee

42Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; 43but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." 44And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.[a]

Four Fishermen Called as Disciples

5 So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets. 3Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

4When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

5But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6And when they had done

4:41 [a]NU-Text omits *the Christ.* **4:44** [a]NU-Text reads *Judea.*



LILY ISAACS • Homecoming Artist, *The Isaacs*

And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, *the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.* | LUKE 2:21

This scripture just popped out at me one day while reading. For some reason, all my life I never knew that Jesus was Jewish, just like me! According to Jewish law, a Jewish boy was to be circumcised on the eighth day. This is a custom that I've grown up with and experienced in my own family. Jesus' parents observed this law and adhered to other Jewish laws concerning the upbringing of Jesus. This realization certainly opened my eyes and made me realize that, yes, Jesus was a Jew. You could say the veil had been lifted off my eyes! He did come to the Jew first, but when the Jews rejected Him, He then turned to the Gentiles and gave them equal opportunity for salvation. After realizing that this salvation through Jesus the Messiah was for the Jew first, I now consider myself "a *completed* Jew." This insight was the turning point in my relationship with Jesus. The Bible also says in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Praise God! We are all one in Christ Jesus.

this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8When Simon Peter saw *it,* he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

9For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." 11So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

12And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on *his* face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

13Then He put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him. 14And He charged him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded."

15However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. 16So He Himself *often* withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic

17Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.[a] 18Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. 19And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with *his* bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.

20When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

21And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

22But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? 24But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

25Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. 26And they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!"

Matthew the Tax Collector

27After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." 28So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

29Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. 30And their scribes and the Pharisees[a] complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

31Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting

33Then they said to Him, "Why do[a] the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?"

34And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."

36Then He spoke a parable to them: "No

5:17 [a]NU-Text reads *present with Him to heal.* **5:30** [a]NU-Text reads *But the Pharisees and their scribes.* **5:33** [a]NU-Text omits *Why do,* making the verse a statement.

one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one;[a] otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was *taken* out of the new does not match the old. [37]And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. [38]But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.[a] [39]And no one, having drunk old *wine,* immediately[a] desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'"[b]

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

6 Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first[a] that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate *them,* rubbing *them* in *their* hands. [2]And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

[3]But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: [4]how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?" [5]And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

Healing on the Sabbath

[6]Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. [7]So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. [8]But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Arise and stand here." And he arose and stood. [9]Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing:

5:36 [a]NU-Text reads *No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old one.* **5:38** [a]NU-Text omits *and both are preserved.* **5:39** [a]NU-Text omits *immediately.* [b]NU-Text reads *good.* **6:1** [a]NU-Text reads *on a Sabbath.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. | LUKE 5:7

For men in the business of catching fish, this was probably the most lucrative day of their business career. In fact, they were so blessed that they almost went out of business. Their ships began to sink. Their success almost destroyed them. Here is an amazing thing. Although this was possibly the greatest catch of fish they had ever witnessed, their response to the blessing of the Lord was to walk away from the business. They were so blessed that they left all to follow the Lord. Just because the Lord blesses our business beyond our wildest dreams, that is not a sign that He wants us to continue in it. His blessing is not necessarily His approval; His lack of blessing is not necessarily His disapproval. We need to recognize His right to command our ship. He may so bless us with prosperity that we are enabled to walk away from it.

Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to
do evil, to save life or to destroy?"[a] [10]And
when He had looked around at them all, He
said to the man,[a] "Stretch out your hand."
And he did so, and his hand was restored as
whole as the other.[b] [11]But they were filled
with rage, and discussed with one another
what they might do to Jesus.

The Twelve Apostles

[12]Now it came to pass in those days that
He went out to the mountain to pray, and
continued all night in prayer to God. [13]And
when it was day, He called His disciples to
Himself; and from them He chose twelve
whom He also named apostles: [14]Simon,
whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his
brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; [15]Matthew and Thomas; James
the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called the
Zealot; [16]Judas *the son* of James, and Judas
Iscariot who also became a traitor.

Jesus Heals a Great Multitude

[17]And He came down with them and stood
on a level place with a crowd of His disciples
and a great multitude of people from all
Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast
of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and
be healed of their diseases, [18]as well as those
who were tormented with unclean spirits.
And they were healed. [19]And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went
out from Him and healed *them* all.

The Beatitudes

[20]Then He lifted up His eyes toward His
disciples, and said:

"Blessed *are you* poor,
For yours is the kingdom of God.
[21] Blessed *are you* who hunger now,
For you shall be filled.
Blessed *are you* who weep now,
For you shall laugh.
[22] Blessed are you when men hate you,
And when they exclude you,
And revile *you,* and cast out your
name as evil,
For the Son of Man's sake.
[23] Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!
For indeed your reward *is* great in
heaven,
For in like manner their fathers did
to the prophets.

Jesus Pronounces Woes

[24] "But woe to you who are rich,
For you have received your
consolation.
[25] Woe to you who are full,
For you shall hunger.
Woe to you who laugh now,
For you shall mourn and weep.
[26] Woe to you[a] when all[b] men speak well
of you,
For so did their fathers to the false
prophets.

Love Your Enemies

[27]"But I say to you who hear: Love your
enemies, do good to those who hate you,
[28]bless those who curse you, and pray for
those who spitefully use you. [29]To him who
strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other
also. And from him who takes away your
cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either.
[30]Give to everyone who asks of you. And
from him who takes away your goods do not
ask *them* back. [31]And just as you want men
to do to you, you also do to them likewise.
[32]"But if you love those who love you,
what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. [33]And if
you do good to those who do good to you,
what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. [34]And if you lend *to those*
from whom you hope to receive back, what
credit is that to you? For even sinners lend
to sinners to receive as much back. [35]But
love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward
will be great, and you will be sons of the
Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. [36]Therefore be merciful, just as
your Father also is merciful.

Do Not Judge

[37]"Judge not, and you shall not be
judged. Condemn not, and you shall not
be condemned. Forgive, and you will be
forgiven. [38]Give, and it will be given to
you: good measure, pressed down, shaken

6:9 [a]M-Text reads *to kill.* **6:10** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *to him.*
[b]NU-Text omits *as whole as the other.* **6:26** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to you.* [b]M-Text omits *all.*

together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

39And He spoke a parable to them: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? 40A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. 41And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? 42Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that *is* in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that *is* in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

A Tree Is Known by Its Fruit

43"For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44For every tree is known by its own fruit. For *men* do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. 45A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart[a] brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Build on the Rock

46"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? 47Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.[a] 49But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell.[a] And the ruin of that house was great."

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

7 Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. 2And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. 3So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading

6:45 [a]NU-Text omits *treasure of his heart*. **6:48** [a]NU-Text reads *for it was well built*. **6:49** [a]NU-Text reads *collapsed*.



KIM COLLINGSWORTH • Homecoming Artist, Pianist, *The Collingsworth Family*

Pray for those who spitefully use you. | LUKE 6:28

I don't think we need a theologian or even a Bible commentary to understand what this verse means. We are simply to pray for our enemies! You will soon find that you cannot hate people you're praying for. Prayer and hatred just don't go together. Gradually, as we pray, we begin to love our enemies, and instead of feeling animosity toward them, we begin to be peacemakers. Let's pray for our enemies so that we may be known for being comforters rather than confronters.

with Him to come and heal his servant. 4And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, 5"for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue."

6Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. 7Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it*."

9When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" 10And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.[a]

Jesus Raises the Son of the Widow of Nain

11Now it happened, the day after, *that* He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. 12And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. 13When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried *him* stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." 15So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

16Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." 17And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

John the Baptist Sends Messengers to Jesus

18Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. 19And John, calling two of his disciples to *him*, sent *them* to Jesus,[a] saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

20When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'" 21And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

22Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that *the* blind see, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. 23And blessed is *he* who is not offended because of Me."

24When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 25But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. 26But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. 27This is *he* of whom it is written:

'Behold, I send My messenger before
Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before You.'[a]

28For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist;[a] but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

29And when all the people heard *Him,* even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. 30But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

31And the Lord said,[a] "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? 32They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying:

'We played the flute for you,
And you did not dance;
We mourned to you,
And you did not weep.'

7:10 [a]NU-Text omits *who had been sick.* **7:19** [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord.*
7:27 [a]Malachi 3:1 **7:28** [a]NU-Text reads *there is none greater than John.*
7:31 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *And the Lord said.*

33For John the Baptist came neither eating
bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He
has a demon.' 34The Son of Man has come
eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a
glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax
collectors and sinners!' 35But wisdom is
justified by all her children."

A Sinful Woman Forgiven

36Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to
eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's
house, and sat down to eat. 37And behold, a
woman in the city who was a sinner, when
she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the
Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask
of fragrant oil, 38and stood at His feet behind
Him weeping; and she began to wash His
feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the
hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and
anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. 39Now
when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw
this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man,
if He were a prophet, would know who and
what manner of woman *this is* who is touch-
ing Him, for she is a sinner."

40And Jesus answered and said to him,
"Simon, I have something to say to you."

So he said, "Teacher, say it."

41"There was a certain creditor who had
two debtors. One owed five hundred dena-
rii, and the other fifty. 42And when they had
nothing with which to repay, he freely for-
gave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which
of them will love him more?"

43Simon answered and said, "I suppose
the *one* whom he forgave more."

And He said to him, "You have rightly
judged." 44Then He turned to the woman
and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman?
I entered your house; you gave Me no water
for My feet, but she has washed My feet
with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair
of her head. 45You gave Me no kiss, but this
woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since
the time I came in. 46You did not anoint My
head with oil, but this woman has anointed
My feet with fragrant oil. 47Therefore I say
to you, her sins, which *are* many, are for-
given, for she loved much. But to whom
little is forgiven, *the same* loves little."

48Then He said to her, "Your sins are
forgiven."

49And those who sat at the table with
Him began to say to themselves, "Who is
this who even forgives sins?"

50Then He said to the woman, "Your
faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Many Women Minister to Jesus

8 Now it came to pass, afterward, that
He went through every city and vil-
lage, preaching and bringing the glad
tidings of the kingdom of God. And the
twelve *were* with Him, 2and certain women
who had been healed of evil spirits and
infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out
of whom had come seven demons, 3and
Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward,
and Susanna, and many others who pro-
vided for Him[a] from their substance.

The Parable of the Sower

4And when a great multitude had gath-
ered, and they had come to Him from every
city, He spoke by a parable: 5"A sower went
out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some
fell by the wayside; and it was trampled
down, and the birds of the air devoured it.
6Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang
up, it withered away because it lacked mois-
ture. 7And some fell among thorns, and the
thorns sprang up with it and choked it.
8But others fell on good ground, sprang up,
and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When
He had said these things He cried, "He who
has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Purpose of Parables

9Then His disciples asked Him, saying,
"What does this parable mean?"

10And He said, "To you it has been given
to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,
but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that

'Seeing they may not see,
And hearing they may not understand.'[a]

The Parable of the Sower Explained

11"Now the parable is this: The seed is the
word of God. 12Those by the wayside are the
ones who hear; then the devil comes and
takes away the word out of their hearts, lest
they should believe and be saved. 13But the
ones on the rock *are those* who, when they
hear, receive the word with joy; and these

8:3 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *them.* **8:10** [a]Isaiah 6:9

have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. 14Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with patience.

The Parable of the Revealed Light

16"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts *it* under a bed, but sets *it* on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. 17For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor *anything* hidden that will not be known and come to light. 18Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers Come to Him

19Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. 20And it was told Him *by some,* who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You."

21But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

Wind and Wave Obey Jesus

22Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out. 23But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling *with water,* and were in jeopardy. 24And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. 25But He said to them, "Where is your faith?"

And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

26Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes,[a] which is opposite Galilee. 27And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes,[a] nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. 28When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" 29For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.

30Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?"

And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. 31And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

32Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. 33Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

34When those who fed *them* saw what had happened, they fled and told *it* in the city and in the country. 35Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. 36They also who had seen *it* told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. 37Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes[a] asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.

38Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 39"Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed through-

8:26 [a]NU-Text reads *Gerasenes.* **8:27** [a]NU-Text reads *who had demons and for a long time wore no clothes.* **8:37** [a]NU-Text reads *Gerasenes.*

out the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

40So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. 41And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, 42for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. 43Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, 44came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

45And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?"

When all denied it, Peter and those with him[a] said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"[b]

46But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." 47Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.

48And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer;[a] your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

49While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house,* saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher."[a]

50But when Jesus heard *it,* He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." 51When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in[a] except Peter, James, and John,[b] and the father and mother of the girl. 52Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." 53And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead.

54But He put them all outside,[a] took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." 55Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given *something* to eat. 56And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

Sending Out the Twelve

9 Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. 3And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.

4"Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. 5And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them."

6So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Herod Seeks to See Jesus

7Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, 8and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. 9Herod said, "John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" So he sought to see Him.

Feeding the Five Thousand

10And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. 11But when the multitudes knew *it,* they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. 12When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here."

13But He said to them, "You give them something to eat."

And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and

8:45 [a]NU-Text omits *and those with him.* [b]NU-Text omits *and You say, 'Who touched Me?'* **8:48** [a]NU-Text omits *be of good cheer.* **8:49** [a]NU-Text adds *anymore.* **8:51** [a]NU-Text adds *with Him.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *Peter, John, and James.* **8:54** [a]NU-Text omits *put them all outside.*

buy food for all these people." [14]For there were about five thousand men.

Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty." [15]And they did so, and made them all sit down.

[16]Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave *them* to the disciples to set before the multitude. [17]So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

[18]And it happened, as He was alone praying, *that* His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"

[19]So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some *say* Elijah; and others *say* that one of the old prophets has risen again."

[20]He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

[21]And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, [22]saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him

[23]Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily,[a] and follow Me. [24]For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. [25]For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? [26]For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and *in His* Father's, and of the holy angels. [27]But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God."

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount

[28]Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. [29]As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became* white *and* glistening. [30]And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, [31]who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. [32]But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. [33]Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, *that* Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said.

[34]While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. [35]And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son.[a] Hear Him!" [36]When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

A Boy Is Healed

[37]Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. [38]Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. [39]And behold, a spirit

9:23 [a]M-Text omits *daily*. **9:35** [a]NU-Text reads *This is My Son, the Chosen One*.



seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth;* and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. [40]So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."

[41]Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." [42]And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed *him.* Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.

Jesus Again Predicts His Death

[43]And they were all amazed at the majesty of God.

But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, [44]"Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men." [45]But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.

Who Is the Greatest?

[46]Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. [47]And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, [48]and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me;



JOYCE MARTIN SANDERS • Homecoming Artist, *The Martins*

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him! | LUKE 11:9–13

My family had a house fire when I was five years old. It was just before Christmas and Mom and Dad moved us into a rented singlewide trailer in a park just outside of town and began the slow process of recovering from the financial and emotional loss. They tried to prepare us for a modest Christmas morning, but with the persistent, hopeful heart of a kindergartener, I made my wish list just the same.

1. A pink Cinderella record player.
2. A jewelry box with a dancing ballerina.

And the most important item on my list . . .

3. A Shirley Temple doll with blonde ringlets, a red-and-white polka dot dress, and shiny black patent leather shoes.

and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great."

Jesus Forbids Sectarianism

[49]Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us."

[50]But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid *him,* for he who is not against us[a] is on our[b] side."

A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior

[51]Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, [52]and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. [53]But they did not receive Him, because His face was *set* for the journey to Jerusalem. [54]And when His disciples James and John saw *this,* they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"[a]

[55]But He turned and rebuked them,[a] and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. [56]For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save *them.*"[a] And they went to another village.

9:50 [a]NU-Text reads *you.* [b]NU-Text reads *your.* **9:54** [a]NU-Text omits *just as Elijah did.* **9:55** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **9:56** [a]NU-Text omits the first sentence of this verse.

After a sleepless Christmas Eve we woke up to find apples, oranges, and sock monkeys. Although years have blurred the memory of my disappointment, as a parent I can only imagine how my mom and dad felt to be unable to fulfill their children's Christmas dreams. I am sure the morning was filled with stories about gratefulness and contentment, and reminders that there was always someone else less fortunate than we.

But the next moment will be etched in my memory forever. Dad stepped outside and immediately came back in yelling something at Mom, who squealed and then followed him back outside. They came back in with armloads of packages someone had left in our car. After several trips our living room floor was covered with wrapped presents and three little Martin kids began to tear into them.

And to my delight three of the gifts with my name on them were:

1. A pink Cinderella record player.
2. A jewelry box with a dancing ballerina.
3. A Shirley Temple doll with blonde ringlets, a red-and-white polka dot dress, and shiny black patent leather shoes!

If Mom and Dad ever found out who left the gifts, they never told us.

You will never convince me that God doesn't care about the Christmas wishes of a child and likewise the yearnings of a parent to help make those wishes a reality. I believe that He uses moments like this to reveal the image of His love for us and the beauty of the family of God.

The lamp of the body is the eye.
Therefore, when your eye is good,
your whole body also is full of light.
LUKE 11:34

Over and over You said, after telling a story or pointing out a truth, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" Physically, everyone in Your audience had ears. But spiritually, Your truths were only audible and comprehendible to those who had opened themselves to You, who are Truth itself.

It's a frightening thing to restrict the Truth. It is a damning thing to actually embrace a lie. Not only is the result death of the emotions, the intellect, the perceptions, and the spirit, but the avenues for rescue are closed off—no saving, liberating truths can come in. Open my ears, Lord. Open my eyes. Then give me the courage to embrace—without reservation—what is True.



The Cost of Discipleship

57 Now it happened as they journeyed
on the road, *that* someone said to Him,
"Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."
58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have
holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the
Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."
59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me."
But he said, "Lord, let me first go and
bury my father."
60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury
their own dead, but you go and preach the
kingdom of God."
61 And another also said, "Lord, I will fol-
low You, but let me first go *and* bid them
farewell who are at my house."
62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having
put his hand to the plow, and looking back,
is fit for the kingdom of God."

The Seventy Sent Out

10 After these things the Lord appointed
seventy others also,[a] and sent them
two by two before His face into every city
and place where He Himself was about
to go. 2 Then He said to them, "The har-
vest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few;
therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to
send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go your
way; behold, I send you out as lambs among
wolves. 4 Carry neither money bag, knap-
sack, nor sandals; and greet no one along
the road. 5 But whatever house you enter,
first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 And if a son
of peace is there, your peace will rest on it;
if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in
the same house, eating and drinking such
things as they give, for the laborer is wor-
thy of his wages. Do not go from house to
house. 8 Whatever city you enter, and they
receive you, eat such things as are set
before you. 9 And heal the sick there, and
say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come
near to you.' 10 But whatever city you enter,
and they do not receive you, go out into its
streets and say, 11 'The very dust of your city
which clings to us[a] we wipe off against you.
Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom
of God has come near you.' 12 But[a] I say to
you that it will be more tolerable in that
Day for Sodom than for that city.

10:1 [a]NU-Text reads *seventy-two others.* **10:11** [a]NU-Text reads *our feet.*
10:12 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *But.*

Woe to the Impenitent Cities

13 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you,
Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which
were done in you had been done in Tyre
and Sidon, they would have repented long
ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it
will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon
at the judgment than for you. 15 And you,
Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven,
will be brought down to Hades.[a] 16 He who
hears you hears Me, he who rejects you
rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects
Him who sent Me."

The Seventy Return with Joy

17 Then the seventy[a] returned with joy,
saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject
to us in Your name."

18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall
like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I give
you the authority to trample on serpents
and scorpions, and over all the power of
the enemy, and nothing shall by any means
hurt you. 20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in
this, that the spirits are subject to you, but
rather[a] rejoice because your names are
written in heaven."

Jesus Rejoices in the Spirit

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit
and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven
and earth, that You have hidden these things
from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them
to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed
good in Your sight. 22 All[a] things have been
delivered to Me by My Father, and no one
knows who the Son is except the Father, and
who the Father is except the Son, and *the one*
to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*."

23 Then He turned to *His* disciples and
said privately, "Blessed *are* the eyes which see
the things you see; 24 for I tell you that many
prophets and kings have desired to see what
you see, and have not seen *it*, and to hear
what you hear, and have not heard *it*."

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood
up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what
shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 He said to him, "What is written in the
law? What is your reading *of it?*"

27 So he answered and said, " *'You shall
love the* LORD *your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your strength,
and with all your mind,'*[a] and *'your neigh-
bor as yourself.'*"[b]

28 And He said to him, "You have
answered rightly; do this and you will live."

29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said
to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A
certain *man* went down from Jerusalem
to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who
stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*,
and departed, leaving *him* half dead. 31 Now
by chance a certain priest came down that
road. And when he saw him, he passed by on
the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he
arrived at the place, came and looked, and
passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain
Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he
was. And when he saw him, he had compas-
sion. 34 So he went to *him* and bandaged his
wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he
set him on his own animal, brought him to
an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next
day, when he departed,[a] he took out two
denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and
said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever
more you spend, when I come again, I will
repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you
think was neighbor to him who fell among
the thieves?"

37 And he said, "He who showed mercy
on him."

Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do
likewise."

Mary and Martha Worship and Serve

38 Now it happened as they went that
He entered a certain village; and a certain
woman named Martha welcomed Him into
her house. 39 And she had a sister called
Mary, who also sat at Jesus'[a] feet and heard
His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with
much serving, and she approached Him
and said, "Lord, do You not care that my
sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore
tell her to help me."

41 And Jesus[a] answered and said to her,

10:15 [a]NU-Text reads *will you be exalted to heaven? You will be thrust down to Hades!* **10:17** [a]NU-Text reads *seventy-two.* **10:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *rather.* **10:22** [a]M-Text reads *And turning to the disciples He said, "All . . .* **10:27** [a]Deuteronomy 6:5 [b]Leviticus 19:18 **10:35** [a]NU-Text omits *when he departed.* **10:39** [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord's.* **10:41** [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord.*

"Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

The Model Prayer

11 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

2So He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Our Father in heaven,[a]
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.[b]
Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.
3 Give us day by day our daily bread.
4 And forgive us our sins,
For we also forgive everyone who is
indebted to us.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one."[a]

A Friend Comes at Midnight

5And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 6for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? 8I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking

9"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10For everyone who

11:2 [a]NU-Text omits *Our* and *in heaven.* [b]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **11:4** [a]NU-Text omits *But deliver us from the evil one.*



CHARLOTTE RITCHIE • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Formerly with *The Easters*

Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. | LUKE 12:6, 7

I am the mother of two children, Landon and Jayna. Before they were born I thought about all of the things I could teach them. I found out very quickly that the teaching goes both ways. Landon is what some have called "an old soul." He has an interesting way of seeing the world. He also has a lot of questions, for which I have no answer, but I try to do the best I can.

One day he asked, "Mama, how do I know God is real?" I answered, "Baby, God has a way that's meant just for you of getting your attention." He thought about that for a moment and then ran off to play. Several weeks later we were in our car riding down the road. All of a sudden I heard him say,

"Well, He must be real."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, do you see that?" he asked.

He was pointing out the window to a cloud in the sky that had beautiful sunbeams pouring all the way to the horizon.

asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 11If a son asks for bread[a] from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

A House Divided Cannot Stand

14And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled. 15But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub,[a] the ruler of the demons."

16Others, testing *Him,* sought from Him a sign from heaven. 17But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house *divided* against a house falls. 18If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. 19And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they will be your judges. 20But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 21When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. 22But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. 23He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

An Unclean Spirit Returns

24"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking

11:11 [a]NU-Text omits the words from *bread* through *for* in the next sentence. **11:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebul.*

"Do you see that Mama? Nobody else could make that, so God has to be real."

I sat there crying in amazement because at that time in my life I had some questions of my own. I believed that God was real but I just wasn't sure how much He was really involved in my life. God showed His presence to Landon and me for different reasons. Landon needed to know He existed, and I needed to know that He cared for me personally. The Creator of everything cared so much for a six-year-old little boy that He made him aware of His presence through a beautiful piece of art He had placed in the sky at just the right moment. By speaking to my child, I learned that God's involvement with us extends into the deepest, most intricate details of our lives. He is willing to do whatever it takes to be close to us and prove how crazy He is about us. Matthew 6:25–34 tells how God cares for the birds, then says, "Are you not of more value than [the birds]? . . . Now if God so clothes the grass of the field . . . will He not much more clothe you?"

Luke 12:6, 7 says, "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

You are a precious treasure in the eyes of God, and He is present in the everyday details of your life. Just look and you will find Him there.

Gospel Songs

Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

LUKE 12:6, 7

WALTER AND Civilla Martin spent years ministering to others through their songwriting and his pastoral ministry, but it was another married couple who touched their hearts and inspired one of today's most well-loved gospel songs. Of "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," Mrs. Martin once wrote:

> *Early in the spring of 1905, my husband and I were sojourning in Elmira, New York. We contracted a deep friendship for a couple by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle—true saints of God. Mrs. Doolittle had been bedridden for nigh twenty years. Her husband was an incurable cripple who had to propel himself to and from his business in a wheel chair. Despite their afflictions, they lived happy Christian lives, bringing inspiration and comfort to all who knew them. One day while we were visiting with the Doolittles, my husband commented on their bright hopefulness and asked them for the secret of it. Mrs. Doolittle's reply was simple: His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me. The beauty of this simple expression of boundless faith gripped the hearts and fired the imagination of Dr. Martin and me. The hymn "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" was the outcome of that experience.*

"His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me." Such a simple truth. Mrs. Martin mailed her newly-penned lyrics to renowned composer Charles Gabriel, and the gospel favorite was created.

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

Civilla D. Martin, 1905

Why should I feel discouraged?
Why should the shadows come?
Why should my heart be lonely
And long for heaven and home,
When Jesus is my portion?
My constant friend is He:
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

Refrain:
I sing because I'm happy,
I sing because I'm free,
For His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

"Let not your heart be troubled,"
His tender word I hear,
And resting on His goodness,
I lose my doubts and fears;
Though by the path He leadeth
But one step I may see:
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

Refrain

Whenever I am tempted,
Whenever clouds arise,
When song gives place to sighing,
When hope within me dies;
I draw the closer to Him,
From care He sets me free:
His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

Refrain

rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' 25And when he comes, he finds *it* swept and put in order. 26Then he goes and takes with *him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first."

Keeping the Word

27And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed *is* the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts which nursed You!"

28But He said, "More than that, blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Seeking a Sign

29And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.[a] 30For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. 31The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here. 32The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here.

The Lamp of the Body

33"No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts *it* in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. 34The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness. 35Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. 36If then your whole body *is* full of light, having no part dark, *the* whole *body* will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

11:29 [a]NU-Text omits *the prophet*.



BILL GAITHER

Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. | LUKE 12:15

Somebody asks, "How much is enough?"
Greed says, "Just a little bit more."

In football, the officials will throw a flag for encroachment, indicating that before the snap a defensive player illegally crossed the line of scrimmage and made contact with an opponent or had a clear path to the quarterback. Teams are penalized five yards for encroachment.

In life, the fallout for illegally crossing the line into territory that isn't ours is more serious. Greed—*encroachment*—has ruined too many business deals and relationships, all because somebody wanted more and more. In football, a team loses five yards, but in life we can never go back and erase what was lost because of greed.

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers

37 And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee
asked Him to dine with him. So He went in
and sat down to eat. 38 When the Pharisee
saw *it,* he marveled that He had not first
washed before dinner.
39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now you
Pharisees make the outside of the cup and
dish clean, but your inward part is full of
greed and wickedness. 40 Foolish ones! Did
not He who made the outside make the
inside also? 41 But rather give alms of such
things as you have; then indeed all things
are clean to you.
42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you
tithe mint and rue and all manner of
herbs, and pass by justice and the love of
God. These you ought to have done, with-
out leaving the others undone. 43 Woe to
you Pharisees! For you love the best seats
in the synagogues and greetings in the
marketplaces. 44 Woe to you, scribes and
Pharisees, hypocrites![a] For you are like
graves which are not seen, and the men
who walk over *them* are not aware *of them.*"
45 Then one of the lawyers answered
and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these
things You reproach us also."
46 And He said, "Woe to you also, law-
yers! For you load men with burdens hard
to bear, and you yourselves do not touch
the burdens with one of your fingers.
47 Woe to you! For you build the tombs of
the prophets, and your fathers killed them.
48 In fact, you bear witness that you approve
the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed
killed them, and you build their tombs.
49 Therefore the wisdom of God also said,
'I will send them prophets and apostles,
and *some* of them they will kill and perse-
cute,' 50 that the blood of all the prophets
which was shed from the foundation of the
world may be required of this generation,
51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of
Zechariah who perished between the altar
and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be
required of this generation.
52 "Woe to you lawyers! For you have
taken away the key of knowledge. You did

11:44 [a]NU-Text omits *scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.*

The sin of greed is not saved for those who have a lot. Just as there are generous rich people and generous people who don't have much, there are also greedy rich people and greedy people who don't have much, because greed isn't born by how much we do or do not have. It is born in the heart. It is never content and believes the lie that "one more deal" or "one more million" will finally satisfy.

My grandpa Gaither used to say, "In business deals, it's never good when one side walks away with all the marbles." I'm so grateful that his influence helped me learn the value of the statement, "When everybody wins, everybody wins."

Greed wants to come out on top at all costs. But the reality we all face eventually is that only the Giver of Life comes out on top. When He is the center of our joy, things like money, victory, and possessions can no longer take center stage. There just isn't enough room in our lives for *both* Him and greed.

It is such a human instinct to seek just a little bit more. *God, help me resist the encroachment mentality and seek more of You instead.*

Let your waist be girded and your
lamps burning; and you yourselves
be like men who wait for their master,
when he will return from the wedding,
that when he comes and knocks
they may open to him immediately.
LUKE 12:35, 36

It isn't likely that we would be ready and waiting for the bridegroom when He comes to collect us for the biggest party ever if we have not been ready in the times that have been a part of a great relationship. In a close friendship there are a lot of calls, a lot of invitations to get together, often impromptu. Do you want to go fishing? Do you want to have dinner at 6:00? Do you want to meet me to walk? Got time for coffee? Would you like to tromp through the woods? Go hunting?

Good friends say yes to every possible invitation. They think of excuses to get together. They think of each other when there is sadness or disappointment or some special joy. They aren't too busy with the stuff of life to make a relationship. Being ready isn't something that takes a lot of doing when we *stay ready* to spend time with someone we love.



not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

53 And as He said these things to them,[a] the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail *Him* vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, 54 lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.[a]

Beware of Hypocrisy

12 In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first *of all,* "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.

Jesus Teaches the Fear of God

4 "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins?[a] And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Confess Christ Before Men

8 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

10 "And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.

11 "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you

11:53 [a]NU-Text reads *And when He left there.* **11:54** [a]NU-Text omits *and seeking* and *that they might accuse Him.* **12:6** [a]Greek *assarion,* a coin of very small value

should answer, or what you should say. 12For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

The Parable of the Rich Fool

13Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

14But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" 15And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness,[a] for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

16Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry." ' 20But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

21"So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Do Not Worry

22Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. 23Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. 24Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? 25And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 26If you then are not able to do *the* least, why are you anxious for the rest? 27Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He clothe* you, O *you* of little faith?

29"And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. 30For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. 31But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things[a] shall be added to you.

32"Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. 34For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

35"Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning; 36and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. 37Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat,* and will come and serve them. 38And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. 39But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and[a] not allowed his house to be broken into. 40Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

41Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable *only* to us, or to all *people?*"

42And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* master will make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of food in due season? 43Blessed *is* that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 44Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. 45But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, 46the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him,* and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him

12:15 [a]NU-Text reads *all covetousness.* **12:31** [a]NU-Text reads *His kingdom, and these things.* **12:39** [a]NU-Text reads *he would not have allowed.*

Gospel Songs

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

LUKE 14:33

GOD WANTS us to surrender our lives to Him, not for His sake, but for ours. He wants us to trade our burden, which is heavy and laborious, for His, which is easy and light (Matt. 11:28–30). But so often, instead of surrendering our burden, we wrestle to maintain control, and we end up only missing out on the blessing, and the privilege, of God's work. Judson Van DeVenter learned the difficult struggle and ultimate satisfaction of surrendering his life to Christ. His dream was to become a famous artist, and everything he did was to that pursuit. He studied with artists in Europe and began teaching in Pennsylvania to support his dream. It was there that he got involved with revivals held at church, singing and directing music. That's when he discovered his gift and love for leading others to Christ. Plenty of other people noticed too, and they encouraged him to trade his teaching job for full-time ministry. (Funny how easy it is to discern God's will for someone else, isn't it?) But it wasn't so easy for Judson. He wrestled over the decision for five years before finally deciding to submit to what he knew to be God's call on his life.

Van DeVenter began traveling extensively throughout the United States, England, and Scotland, singing and leading music for various evangelists. It was during this time of music ministry that he wrote "I Surrender All," recalling his struggle to surrender every aspect of his life to Christ and knowing the satisfaction of finally doing it. Eventually, he combined his talent for teaching and his expertise in music ministry as an instructor of hymnology at Florida Bible Institute. Even after he retired, he continued to pour his life into the students there, even inviting them to his home for fellowship and singing hymns, including the song he wrote after his decision to pursue full-time ministry, "I Surrender All." One of the students who attested to the impact of this discipleship was Billy Graham, who said of Van DeVenter, "One of the evangelists who influenced my early preaching was also a hymnist who wrote 'I Surrender All,' the Rev. J. W. Van DeVenter. He was a regular visitor at the Florida Bible Institute (now Trinity Bible College) in the late 1930s. We students loved this kind, deeply spiritual gentleman."

I Surrender All

Judson W. Van DeVenter, 1896

All to Jesus I surrender;
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.

Refrain:
I surrender all,
I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender;
Humbly at His feet I bow,
Worldly pleasures all forsaken;
Take me, Jesus, take me now.

Refrain

All to Jesus I surrender;
Make me, Savior, wholly Thine;
Let me feel the Holy Spirit,
Truly know that Thou art mine.

Refrain

All to Jesus I surrender;
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power;
Let Thy blessing fall on me.

Refrain

All to Jesus I surrender;
Now I feel the sacred flame.
Oh, the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory, to His Name!

in two and appoint *him* his portion with the unbelievers. 47And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. 48But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Christ Brings Division

49"I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! 51Do *you* suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. 52For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. 53Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Discern the Time

54Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. 55And when *you see* the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. 56Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how *is it* you do not discern this time?

Make Peace with Your Adversary

57"Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? 58When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. 59I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite."

Repent or Perish

13 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. 4Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

6He also spoke this parable: "A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' 8But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize *it*. 9And if it bears fruit, *well.* But if not, after that[a] you can cut it down.'"

A Spirit of Infirmity

10Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise *herself* up. 12But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." 13And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day."

15The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite![a] Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead *it* away to water it? 16So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" 17And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to

13:9 [a]NU-Text reads *And if it bears fruit after that, well. But if not, you can cut it down.* **13:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Hypocrites.*

shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

18 Then He said, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large[a] tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches."

By reading the scriptures I am so renewed that all nature seems renewed around me and with me. The sky seems to be a pure, a cooler blue, the trees a deeper green. The whole world is charged with the glory of God and I feel fire and music under my feet.

THOMAS MERTON

The Parable of the Leaven

20 And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures[a] of meal till it was all leavened."

The Narrow Way

22 And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' 27 But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. 29 They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."

31 On that very day[a] some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You."

32 And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.' 33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the *day* following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

Jesus Laments over Jerusalem

34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen *gathers* her brood under *her* wings, but you were not willing! 35 See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly,[a] I say to you, you shall not see Me until *the time* comes when you say, *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the* LORD*!'"*[b]

A Man with Dropsy Healed on the Sabbath

14 Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. 2 And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"[a]

4 But they kept silent. And He took *him* and healed him, and let him go. 5 Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey[a] or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" 6 And they could not answer Him regarding these things.

Take the Lowly Place

7 So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you and him

13:19 [a]NU-Text omits *large*. **13:21** [a]Greek *sata*, approximately two pecks in all **13:31** [a]NU-Text reads *In that very hour.* **13:35** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *assuredly.* [b]Psalm 118:26 **14:3** [a]NU-Text adds *or not*. **14:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *son*.

come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. 11For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

12Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. 13But when you give a feast, invite *the* poor, *the* maimed, *the* lame, *the* blind. 14And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

The Parable of the Great Supper

15Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed *is* he who shall eat bread[a] in the kingdom of God!"

16Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18But they all with one *accord* began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

14:15 [a]M-Text reads *dinner.*



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. | LUKE 16:10

I believe there is a principle that applies to all who function in, and are part of, the kingdom of God. Luke 16:10 tells us, "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much."

Everybody is interested in big things. People like to think about them and talk about them. We in the Christian music industry strive for bigger and better things. Yet, creation is made up of little things. The summers are made up of tiny blades of grass, little plants, little buds, little leaflets, little blossoms, little fragrances, little bird notes, and small sounds of gurgling, running water. God builds the summer palace out of little things.

Life is made up primarily of little things. Our life consists of days, and the days are composed of minutes. We never have more than one of them at a time. I often feel that I need two or more at one time, but God knows better. Just one minute at a time is God's law. Until the end of time itself, this law can never be changed. Reflect for a moment on the activities of a day in your life. From rising in the morning until going to bed at night, you will find that the minutes are filled with little things. Take care of the minutes.

[21]So that servant came and reported these
things to his master. Then the master of the
house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go
out quickly into the streets and lanes of
the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the*
maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.' [22]And
the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you
commanded, and still there is room.' [23]Then
the master said to the servant, 'Go out into
the highways and hedges, and compel *them*
to come in, that my house may be filled.
[24]For I say to you that none of those men
who were invited shall taste my supper.'"

Leaving All to Follow Christ

[25]Now great multitudes went with Him.
And He turned and said to them, [26]"If any-
one comes to Me and does not hate his
father and mother, wife and children, broth-
ers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he
cannot be My disciple. [27]And whoever does
not bear his cross and come after Me cannot
be My disciple. [28]For which of you, intend-
ing to build a tower, does not sit down first
and count the cost, whether he has *enough*
to finish *it*— [29]lest, after he has laid the
foundation, and is not able to finish, all who
see *it* begin to mock him, [30]saying, 'This man
began to build and was not able to finish'?
[31]Or what king, going to make war against
another king, does not sit down first and
consider whether he is able with ten thou-
sand to meet him who comes against him
with twenty thousand? [32]Or else, while the
other is still a great way off, he sends a del-
egation and asks conditions of peace. [33]So
likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all
that he has cannot be My disciple.

Little things color our feelings, things like kind or unkind remarks, annoyances, disappointments, smiles, loving words, frowns, encouragement, and praise. Now if our happiness or sadness depends largely on little things, then we may be certain the happiness of others depends on little things also. If we are hurt or helped by what others do, then they are hurt or helped by what we do. *Words* are little things. Can you think of anything smaller than a word? You can pour two hundred of them out of your mouth a minute. Yet, you can never take them back. God takes account of our words. Jesus always notices little things. He noticed the little flowers that blossomed at His feet. One day He declared that the glorious King Solomon had never had in his royal robe colors so splendid as those in these little flowers. He was fond of the birds and asked people to look at them and learn lessons from them. One day He drew a sermon from a tiny mustard seed. Once, a woman touched Jesus in a crowd. Such a small thing was the touch, but it transformed her life. He noticed a poor woman dropping two little bits of copper in the contribution box. Nobody else saw the copper. Indeed, nobody else saw the woman herself. Jesus saw her. He saw her generous heart. Wherever the name of Jesus is preached, the deed of that poor woman is mentioned with praise.

Character is made beautiful by the faithful doing of little things. Be faithful and consistent in small opportunities . . . and the Lord will be pleased to bestow bigger and better opportunities in His own wisdom and time.

Tasteless Salt Is Worthless

34"Salt *is* good; but if the salt has lost its
flavor, how shall it be seasoned? 35It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill,
but men throw it out. He who has ears to
hear, let him hear!"

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15 Then all the tax collectors and the
sinners drew near to Him to hear
Him. 2And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners
and eats with them." 3So He spoke this
parable to them, saying:

4"What man of you, having a hundred
sheep, if he loses one of them, does not
leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness,
and go after the one which is lost until he
finds it? 5And when he has found *it,* he lays
it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6And when he
comes home, he calls together *his* friends
and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice
with me, for I have found my sheep which
was lost!' 7I say to you that likewise there
will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just
persons who need no repentance.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

8"Or what woman, having ten silver
coins,[a] if she loses one coin, does not light
a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds *it?* 9And when she has
found *it,* she calls *her* friends and neighbors
together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have
found the piece which I lost!' 10Likewise, I
say to you, there is joy in the presence of the
angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The Parable of the Lost Son

11Then He said: "A certain man had two
sons. 12And the younger of them said to *his*
father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods
that falls *to me.*' So he divided to them *his*
livelihood. 13And not many days after, the
younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his
possessions with prodigal living. 14But when

15:8 [a]Greek *drachma,* a valuable coin often worn in a ten-piece garland by married women



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." | LUKE 17:5

"I had cancer two years ago—how can I overcome this *fear* of having a reoccurrence?" A lady had patiently waited until the crowd at our product table had thinned out, then she stepped up and posed that question. I could certainly relate to what she was asking. Fear is the number-one demon or dominant emotion that attacks us during a critical health crisis, in adversity, or during times of change.

It had been thirty years, but I vividly recalled getting the diagnosis of cancer myself and feeling as though I had hit a brick wall at full speed. I'll always be thankful for the people who prayed for me all across the country because for some reason I could not pray for myself. However, during that time of trial in my life, I experienced the presence and peace of God like I

he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

17"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." '

20"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring[a] out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. 23And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; 24for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

25"Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

28"But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29So he answered and said to *his* father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

31"And he said to him, 'Son, you are always

15:22 [a]NU-Text reads *Quickly bring.*

had never known. Still, during the night the deceiver came stealing. Satan loves darkness. He does his best work at night. That is when he came to me magnifying every ache and pain I had, telling me that I was not okay and that I was not going to make it. When we are most vulnerable, Satan attacks our mental state because weakness is where he stages battle to defeat us.

When fear looms during any crisis in our lives, instead of hoping the fear will go away, we need something bigger than the fear. The best antidote to fear is faith. Faith is the opposite of fear, and we are children of faith. Jesus said that faith no bigger than a mustard seed could move mountains (Matt. 17:20). Faith comes from "hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Hope guards the mind, and faith guards the heart. Especially during that period of my life, I filled my heart and mind with scriptures that increased my faith. I still do today. I prayed the prayer of the disciples, "Lord, increase my faith." Mama taught me that hope and faith are not about everything turning out okay; they are about being okay no matter how things turn out, and that is the confidence we have in Christ (Luke 17:5).

with me, and all that I have is yours. [32]It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"

The Parable of the Unjust Steward

16 He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. [2]So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

[3]"Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. [4]I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

[5]"So he called every one of his master's debtors to *him,* and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' [6]And he said, 'A hundred measures[a] of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' [7]Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures[a] of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' [8]So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

[9]"And I say to you, make friends for your-

16:6 [a]Greek *batos,* eight or nine gallons each (Old Testament *bath*)
16:7 [a]Greek *koros,* ten or twelve bushels each (Old Testament *kor*)



DONY McGUIRE • Homecoming Artist, Songwriter, Music Minister, Married to Reba Rambo-McGuire

Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left. | LUKE 17:33–36

One of the greatest awakenings I've experienced in my spiritual journey is to open my heart to broader realms of understanding that there's possibly more than one way to interpret a particular passage of the Bible. A part of that awakening has come from learning there's a vast difference between Western and Eastern mindsets as it pertains to hearing and understanding Scripture. So I offer this as food for thought.

Let's consider the following passage. While Western minds have capitalized on "left behind" concepts that send believers frantically doing everything humanly possible to get taken out of this corrupt world, Jesus' followers, who had Eastern mindsets, simply heard Him talking about the dual nature of mankind—the old versus the new. One taken; one left behind. Jesus came to take away our sin nature, so all that's "left behind" is His new creation!

Such are many of the concepts in parables Jesus used to teach and instruct those who followed Him. My life is becoming more and more enriched as I discover how to "hear" His teachings in their proper context.

selves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail,[a] they may receive you into an everlasting home. 10He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much. 11Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches?* 12And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?

13"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

The Law, the Prophets, and the Kingdom

14Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. 15And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

16"The law and the prophets *were* until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. 17And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.

18"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from *her* husband commits adultery.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

19"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell[a] from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24"Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' 25But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

27"Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

Jesus Warns of Offenses

17 Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe *to him* through whom they do come! 2It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. 3Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you,[a] rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you,[a] saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

Faith and Duty

5And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

6So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. 7And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? 8But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? 9Does he thank that servant because

16:9 [a]NU-Text reads *it fails.* **16:21** [a]NU-Text reads *with what fell.*
17:3 [a]NU-Text omits *against you.* **17:4** [a]M-Text omits *to you.*

he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.[a] 10So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

Ten Lepers Cleansed

11Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13And they lifted up *their* voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

14So when He saw *them,* He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

15And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

17So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? 18Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

The Coming of the Kingdom

20Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!'[a] For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

17:9 [a]NU-Text ends verse with *commanded;* M-Text omits *him.*
17:21 [a]NU-Text reverses *here* and *there.*



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. | LUKE 18:1

Any time, any place, wherever you set your heart toward God, you can commune with Him. Daniel prayed to God before an open window three times daily (Dan. 6:10). Moses met God in a burning bush on the backside of a desert that was his prayer room (Ex. 3:4, 5). Peter met God upon a housetop; that was his prayer room (Acts 10:9). John the Divine met God on the Isle of Patmos. That was his place of prayer (Rev. 1:9).

These Bible examples show that you don't have to have a specific place to pray and commune with God. Some people have a prayer room set aside in their homes. Others pray in their cars while driving back and forth to work. Many people pray while doing household chores or yard work. Farmers pray on the tractors while moms pray at the sink.

It's not so important where we pray, but it is important that we pray regularly. Jesus said we "always ought to pray." A consistent prayer life is the key to a meaningful and close personal relationship with God. It makes your Christian life come alive. How is your prayer life? Have your lines of communication with your Heavenly Father been on hold? Why don't you call on Him today? He's just waiting to hear from you! God never puts us on hold; His lines are always open!

22Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*. 23And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!'[a] Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. 24For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. 25But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. 30Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

31"In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. 32Remember Lot's wife. 33Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. 35Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. 36Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."[a]

37And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?"

So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

18 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. 3Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' 4And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"

6Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. 7And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

9Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Jesus Blesses Little Children

15Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw *it,* they rebuked them. 16But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 17Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler

18Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

19So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is,* God. 20You know the commandments: *'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,'*

17:23 [a]NU-Text reverses *here* and *there*. **17:36** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit verse 36.

'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' "[a]

[21]And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."

[22]So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

[23]But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

With God All Things Are Possible

[24]And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! [25]For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

[26]And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"

[27]But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

[28]Then Peter said, "See, we have left all[a] and followed You."

[29]So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, [30]who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Jesus a Third Time Predicts His Death and Resurrection

[31]Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. [32]For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. [33]They will scourge *Him* and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

18:20 [a]Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20 **18:28** [a]NU-Text reads *our own*.



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." | LUKE 18:16, 17

I had paid a weeklong visit to a nursing home. My mother was there. Such a visit made me agonize and cry and suffer and worry—and laugh. Persons could get well-nigh hysterical if they drew parallels between old age and childhood.

Children go through a stage of learning to walk in a walker.

Oldsters get to the stage of *keeping* walking with a walker. All two-wheeled vehicles need a third wheel added for youngsters. It is also back to the three-wheeled bike for the oldsters.

Children are messy eaters and need little bibs. Same story way down the years.

Troubles with the potty plague the child. You guessed it.

Children's storybooks have big print and simple stories. Same goes for the grandmothers.

[34]But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.

A Blind Man Receives His Sight

[35]Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. [36]And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. [37]So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. [38]And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

[39]Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

[40]So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, [41]saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

[42]Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." [43]And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it,* gave praise to God.

Jesus Comes to Zacchaeus' House

19 Then *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. [2]Now behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. [3]And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. [4]So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that *way.* [5]And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him,[a] and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." [6]So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. [7]But when they saw *it,* they all

19:5 [a]NU-Text omits *and saw him.*

When music hour comes for the child, out come the rhythm instruments—sticks and bells and triangle. For the old? Yep.

It's wonderful, it's terrible; it's grand, it's sad. It may also be necessary in God's scheme. He said, "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). We've always preached that to mean that we should be like a child in simple trust and eager love while we're still in command of our lives. But perhaps God allows old age to happen to us so our earthly props of sophistication and power and intellect and prestige all come to nothing, and we are again little children, in body as well as in spirit, totally dependent upon His care and keeping.

There is something lovely here, in spite of everything. The body deteriorates, so the spirit can learn to live—in another dimension, another place, another time—with the Guardian of all the ages as parent!

"Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Is. 46:4).

complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner."

8Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."

9And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; 10for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The Parable of the Minas

11Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas,[a] and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this *man* to reign over us.'

15"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17And he said to him, 'Well *done,* good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

20"Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21For I feared you, because

19:13 [a]The *mina* (Greek *mna,* Hebrew *minah*) was worth about three months' salary.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done. | LUKE 22:42

If ever there was a private prayer prayed to the Father in heaven, this is it. There was no one in earshot to hear this prayer. It was exclusively between the Father and the Son, yet it is a prayer that has been publicized around the world. Every instructed Christian is familiar with the words uttered in Gethsemane. Perhaps Jesus prayed this prayer, not for Himself but for us. He did that at the graveside of Lazarus. Jesus said to His Father, "I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe" (John 11:42). By asking the Father to remove the cup from Him if there were any other way for man to be saved, He was proving to us that there was no other way. Jesus always gets His prayers answered. If there was another way short of the death of the Son of God, it would have been revealed in answer to this prayer. I believe Jesus allowed His prayer to be public so that the world would know for certain that there is no other plan for our salvation.

you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

24"And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give *it* to him who has ten minas.' 25(But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.'"

The Triumphal Entry

28When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage[a] and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, *that* He sent two of His disciples, 30saying, "Go into the village opposite *you,* where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring *it here.* 31And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing *it?*' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.'"

32So those who were sent went their way and found *it* just as He had said to them. 33But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?"

34And they said, "The Lord has need of him." 35Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. 36And as He went, *many* spread their clothes on the road.

37Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, 38saying:

> " *'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the* LORD*!'*[a]
> Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

39And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

40But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

41Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

45Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it,[a] 46saying to them, "It is written, *'My house is*[a] *a house of prayer,'*[b] but you have made it a *'den of thieves.'"*[c]

47And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, 48and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

Jesus' Authority Questioned

20 Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, *that* the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted *Him* 2and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?"

3But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: 4The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?"

5And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then[a] did you not believe him?' 6But if

19:29 [a]M-Text reads *Bethsphage.* **19:38** [a]Psalm 118:26 **19:45** [a]NU-Text reads *those who were selling.* **19:46** [a]NU-Text reads *shall be.* [b]Isaiah 56:7 [c]Jeremiah 7:11 **20:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *then.*

we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." [7]So they answered that they did not know where *it was* from.

[8]And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers

[9]Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. [10]Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. [11]Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty-handed. [12]And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast *him* out.

[13]"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect *him* when they see him.' [14]But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.'



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. | LUKE 23:11

The phrase "treated Him with contempt" means literally to make Him seem as if He were nothing; thus Herod unwittingly taught us a great lesson. Our attitudes toward others determine whether they appear to be something, or whether they appear to be nothing.

Parents can make a child that is really something appear to be practically nothing.

Christians can hold an attitude toward other Christians that make them appear as nothing.

Husbands and wives can nothing out, or cancel out, each other's positive potentials and traits.

Someone has said, "Act as if_____ and you will become." This certainly seems to be true. Whatever we act as if the people around us are, that is what they tend to become.

It behooves us, therefore, to set about acting as if those closest to us are valuable persons—intricate, unique, special somebodies. Likewise, we can see our fellow Christians as the true gems of this world—special souls called of and accepted by God.

Most of all, I want to view Jesus as Jesus, the very Christ, the One who is all, the beginning and the end. May nothing in my attitude toward Him ever be guilty of making Him seem as nothing.

15So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed *him.* Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others."

And when they heard *it* they said, "Certainly not!"

17Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

> *'The stone which the builders rejected*
> *Has become the chief cornerstone'*?[a]

18Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

19And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people[a] —for they knew He had spoken this parable against them.

The Pharisees: Is It Lawful to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

20So they watched *Him,* and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.

21Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: 22Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

23But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why do you test Me?[a] 24Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?"

They answered and said, "Caesar's."

25And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

26But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.

The Sadducees: What About the Resurrection?

27Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to *Him* and asked Him, 28saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us *that* if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 29Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. 30And the second[a] took her as wife, and he died childless. 31Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children,[a] and died. 32Last of all the woman died also. 33Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."

34Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. 37But even Moses showed in the *burning* bush *passage* that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord *'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'*[a] 38For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."

39Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." 40But after that they dared not question Him anymore.

Jesus: How Can David Call His Descendant Lord?

41And He said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? 42Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms:

20:17 [a]Psalm 118:22 **20:19** [a]M-Text reads *but they were afraid.* **20:23** [a]NU-Text omits *Why do you test Me?* **20:30** [a]NU-Text ends verse 30 here. **20:31** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the seven also left no children.* **20:37** [a]Exodus 3:6, 15



'The LORD said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
43 *Till I make Your enemies Your*
footstool." [a]

44Therefore David calls Him *'Lord'*; how is
He then his Son?"

Beware of the Scribes

45Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, 46"Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, 47who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

The Widow's Two Mites

21 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, 2and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. 3So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; 4for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God,[a] but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

5Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 6"These things which you see—the days will come in which not

20:43 [a]Psalm 110:1 **21:4** [a]NU-Text omits *for God.*



ERNIE HAASE • Homecoming Artist, *Ernie Haase and Signature Sound*, Formerly with *The Cathedral Quartet*

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. | LUKE 23:34

Ray Charles sang a song that said, "No, you'll never know the one who loved you so. No, you don't know me." This love song to a lady says in essence, "If you could really know and understand me, you'd love me."

When Jesus cried from the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," I believe another way of translating this could be, "Father, if they really knew Me and My love for them, they would not do this to me. Forgive them. They are just ignorant of My love."

You think you're misunderstood? Get in line! The point is we are to forgive and love like Jesus does.

If people really knew your heart, they would love you, but guess what? They don't and can't. And if we really know their hearts, the things they've been through, the history of their heart's journeys, we would show a lot more mercy and grace and forgiveness like Jesus did. He knew it all.

Let's keep on loving and forgiving. Jesus knows your heart. He understands when you're misunderstood, and He knows the hearts of those you think don't understand you. We can't fully know each other, but the love of our souls does.

one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

[7]So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?"

[8]And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He*,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore[a] do not go after them. [9]But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will* not *come* immediately."

[10]Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. [11]And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. [12]But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. [13]But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. [14]Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; [15]for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. [16]You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put *some* of you to death. [17]And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. [18]But not a hair of your head shall be lost. [19]By your patience possess your souls.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

[20]"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. [21]Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. [22]For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. [23]But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. [24]And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Coming of the Son of Man

[25]"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; [26]men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. [27]Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. [28]Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

The Parable of the Fig Tree

[29]Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. [30]When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. [31]So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. [32]Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. [33]Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

The Importance of Watching

[34]"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life,

21:8 [a]NU-Text omits *Therefore*.



and that Day come on you unexpectedly.
35For it will come as a snare on all those
who dwell on the face of the whole earth.
36Watch therefore, and pray always that
you may be counted worthy[a] to escape all
these things that will come to pass, and to
stand before the Son of Man."

37And in the daytime He was teaching
in the temple, but at night He went out
and stayed on the mountain called Olivet.
38Then early in the morning all the people
came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

The Plot to Kill Jesus

22 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread
drew near, which is called Passover.
2And the chief priests and the scribes
sought how they might kill Him, for they
feared the people.

3Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed
Iscariot, who was numbered among the
twelve. 4So he went his way and conferred
with the chief priests and captains, how
he might betray Him to them. 5And they
were glad, and agreed to give him money.
6So he promised and sought opportunity
to betray Him to them in the absence of
the multitude.

Jesus and His Disciples Prepare the Passover

7Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread,
when the Passover must be killed. 8And He
sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare
the Passover for us, that we may eat."

9So they said to Him, "Where do You
want us to prepare?"

10And He said to them, "Behold, when
you have entered the city, a man will meet
you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him
into the house which he enters. 11Then you

21:36 [a]NU-Text reads *may have strength.*



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." | LUKE 23:42, 43

Dear Hoppers, I often hear you sing on WFCA-FM out of French Camp, Mississippi, and sometimes on Sunday on KAAY-AM Little Rock. Your song "That's Him" really brightens up my life, picks up my spirits, and encourages me in my walk with our heavenly Father.

This came from a man in Mississippi who was incarcerated. In his letter he shared that while in prison he had accepted Jesus as his personal Savior, and marveled that, "a person as wretched as I once was is loved by a forgiving God. Now I pray that my born-again life shows that no matter what we do or who we are, God will perform a miracle of transformation if we ask and believe."

This is a perfect example of God's amazing grace that frees the heart and mind of one held captive by sin. Jesus, in the torments of the Cross, was willing to talk to a thief about the salvation of his soul. He could have answered, "Why should I take care of you now, when I am dying for the salvation of the entire world?" But no! The Savior of the world had time

shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' [12]Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready."

[13]So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper

[14]When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve[a] apostles with Him. [15]Then He said to them, "With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; [16]for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

[17]Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; [18]for I say to you,[a] I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

[19]And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it,* and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

[20]Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. [21]But behold, the hand of My betrayer *is* with Me on the table. [22]And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"

[23]Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.

The Disciples Argue About Greatness

[24]Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. [25]And He said to them,

22:14 [a]NU-Text omits *twelve.* **22:18** [a]NU-Text adds *from now on.*

for a thief. Jesus chose not to remember that this thief had mocked Him only a short time before, along with the other thief (Matt. 27:44). Instead He gave the repentant thief more than he asked for—He gave immediate forgiveness. To his prayer "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom," Jesus' answer was, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:42, 43). That morning this thief had been justly condemned before a human trial. Before sunset he was acquitted, forgiven, cleansed, and received by the Lord who made heaven and earth.

From the Cross, Jesus speaks to us today who are in a prison of our own making, those held captive by fear, past mistakes, inferiority, ambition, demands of society, sickness, broken hearts. A heart totally surrendered and dependent upon the grace of God will experience freedom, joy, and peace.

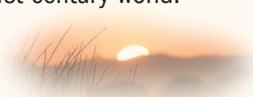
Yes, when Jesus walks through our lives like that, we, too, will say, "That's Him!"

But all too often we tend to not want to turn loose control and abandon our own strategies. We are afraid to admit our failures and expose our emptiness. It is our self-sufficiency that Jesus identified as our biggest impediment to a life with Him. Only when we realize that through trusting Christ, yesterday cannot accuse us, because He took care of that at the Cross, can we place all of our tomorrows securely in His hands. "THAT'S HIM."

Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"
LUKE 24:5

The last notes of "Because He Lives" still reverberated through the rocks when we took our turn at seeing for ourselves the place where many historians believe our Lord lay, wrapped in the grave clothes that held together His riddled body. "He's gone," Guy Penrod said. We smiled. *Of course He's gone*. Yet there was a thrill in saying the words the disciples said that first pre-dawn Easter, as if we were the first three to discover this reality. I couldn't help looking at the foot of the hand-hewn stone resting place to see if there were folded linens. I couldn't help wishing, as I stepped through the small doorway back into the garden flooded with Middle Eastern sunshine, that when my eyes adjusted to the light I'd see a figure asking why I was crying or why I came here to seek someone so alive.

Yet we all know, as powerful as it is to walk where Jesus actually walked, that it is not the place but the Person who ultimately changes our lives. And as moving as it is to say or hear the phrases His friends must have said when He walked the roads of Nazareth, it is the living Word that He *is* that speaks truth into our days in this twenty-first-century world.



"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' [26]But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. [27]For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

[28]"But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. [29]And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed *one* upon Me, [30]that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

[31]And the Lord said,[a] "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. [32]But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me,* strengthen your brethren."

[33]But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

[34]Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

Supplies for the Road

[35]And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?"

So they said, "Nothing."

[36]Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take *it,* and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. [37]For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: *'And He was numbered with the transgressors.'*[a] For the things concerning Me have an end."

[38]So they said, "Lord, look, here *are* two swords."

And He said to them, "It is enough."

The Prayer in the Garden

[39]Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. [40]When He came

22:31 [a]NU-Text omits *And the Lord said.* **22:37** [a]Isaiah 53:12

to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

41And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." 43Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.[a]

45When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. 46Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

Worship is not haphazard music done poorly, not even great music done merely as performance; we celebrate God when we enjoy and participate in music to His glory.

RONALD ALLEN

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

47And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

49When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

51But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

52Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly

54Having arrested Him, they led *Him* and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. 55Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. 56And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him."

57But he denied Him,[a] saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."

58And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them."

But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

59Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this *fellow* also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."

60But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!"

Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster[a] crowed. 61And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows,[a] you will deny Me three times." 62So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus Mocked and Beaten

63Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. 64And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him,[a] saying, "Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?" 65And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

66As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 67"If You are the Christ, tell us."

But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe. 68And if I also ask *you,* you will by no means answer Me or let *Me* go.[a] 69Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God."

70Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?"

So He said to them, "You *rightly* say that I am."

71And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

22:44 [a]NU-Text brackets verses 43 and 44 as not in the original text. **22:57** [a]NU-Text reads *denied it.* **22:60** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *a rooster.* **22:61** [a]NU-Text adds *today.* **22:64** [a]NU-Text reads *And having blindfolded Him, they asked Him.* **22:68** [a]NU-Text omits *also* and *Me or let Me go.*

Jesus Handed Over to Pontius Pilate

23 Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. 2And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this *fellow* perverting the[a] nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

3Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

He answered him and said, "*It is as* you say."

4So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man."

5But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

Jesus Faces Herod

6When Pilate heard of Galilee,[a] he asked if the Man were a Galilean. 7And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. 8Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. 9Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. 10And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. 11Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him,* arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. 12That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

Taking the Place of Barabbas

13Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, 14said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; 15no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him;[a] and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. 16I will therefore chastise Him and

23:2 [a]NU-Text reads *our.* **23:6** [a]NU-Text omits *of Galilee.* **23:15** [a]NU-Text reads *for he sent Him back to us.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. | LUKE 24:45

When the world uses the expression "Be open-minded," they often mean, "Be willing to weigh and consider every opinion." For the Christian, the truly open-minded one is the one who receives the revelation of Christ. Jesus opened the minds of the disciples on the road to Emmaus to understand the Scriptures. I want to have an open mind and a closed mind—a mind that is open to the Lord Jesus and a mind that is closed to error! I pray I will never be narrow-minded. The only thing better than opening the understanding must be what the Lord did for Lydia. He opened her heart! (See Acts 16:14.)

release *Him*" [17](for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast).[a]

[18]And they all cried out at once, saying, "Away with this *Man,* and release to us Barabbas"— [19]who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.

[20]Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. [21]But they shouted, saying, "Crucify *Him,* crucify Him!"

[22]Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let *Him* go."

[23]But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed.[a] [24]So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. [25]And he released to them[a] the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

The King on a Cross

[26]Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear *it* after Jesus.

[27]And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. [28]But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. [29]For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' [30]Then they will begin *'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"* '[a] [31]For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

[32]There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. [33]And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. [34]Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."[a]

And they divided His garments and cast lots. [35]And the people stood looking on.

When Christian worship is dull and joyless, Jesus Christ has been left outside—that is the only possible explanation.

JAMES S. STEWART

But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

[36]The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, [37]and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

[38]And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:[a]

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

[39]Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ,[a] save Yourself and us."

[40]But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? [41]And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." [42]Then he said to Jesus, "Lord,[a] remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

[43]And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Jesus Dies on the Cross

[44]Now it was[a] about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. [45]Then the sun was darkened,[a] and the veil of the temple was torn in two. [46]And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, *'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'*"[a] Having said this, He breathed His last.

[47]So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

[48]And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned.

23:17 [a]NU-Text omits verse 17. **23:23** [a]NU-Text omits *and of the chief priests.* **23:25** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them.* **23:30** [a]Hosea 10:8 **23:34** [a]NU-Text brackets the first sentence as a later addition. **23:38** [a]NU-Text omits *written* and *in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.* **23:39** [a]NU-Text reads *Are You not the Christ?* **23:42** [a]NU-Text reads *And he said, "Jesus, remember me.* **23:44** [a]NU-Text adds *already.* **23:45** [a]NU-Text reads *obscured.* **23:46** [a]Psalm 31:5

[49]But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

[50]Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. [51]He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting[a] for the kingdom of God. [52]This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. [53]Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb *that was* hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. [54]That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

[55]And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. [56]Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

He Is Risen

24 Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them,[a] came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. [2]But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. [3]Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4]And it happened, as they were greatly[a] perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. [5]Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? [6]He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, [7]saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the

23:51 [a]NU-Text reads *who was waiting.* **24:1** [a]NU-Text omits *and certain other women with them.* **24:4** [a]NU-Text omits *greatly.*



KAREN PECK GOOCH • Homecoming Artist, *Karen Peck and New River*

And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen. | LUKE 24:50–53

Several months ago, while preaching a revival, Reverend Bob Pittman briefly touched on a passage of Scripture that to this day is indelibly etched in my mind. The disciples lived with Jesus for three years. They walked with Him and fellowshipped with Him. He was their leader, mentor, teacher, friend, and their Messiah. They knew Him and they loved Him. They watched Jesus suffer and die on a cross. Even after the Resurrection, the disciples walked with Him for several days. At the end of Luke, while Jesus was ascending into heaven, verse 52 says that the disciples "worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Great joy? Wow! If the disciples were so close to Jesus, then why weren't they *sad* to see Jesus leaving them? Instead, they were excited about going out and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"

8And they remembered His words. 9Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. 11And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. 12But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying[a] by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

The Road to Emmaus

13Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles[a] from Jerusalem. 14And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

17And He said to them, "What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"[a]

18Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

19And He said to them, "What things?"

So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. 21But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today

24:12 [a]NU-Text omits *lying*. **24:13** [a]Literally *sixty stadia* **24:17** [a]NU-Text reads *as you walk? And they stood still, looking sad.*

My heart has been so blessed by these verses. Three things have come to my mind regarding their meaning:

1. The disciples knew that even though He was leaving them then, Jesus would soon return.
2. Jesus would be sending them the Holy Spirit to comfort them and teach them everything they would need to know. So Jesus really wasn't leaving them at all.
3. The disciples were excited about going out and preaching the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ because they *knew* that everything that Jesus had taught them and everything that they had experienced with Him was *true*. *That* is why they had great joy.

Even through my greatest trials, I can still stand strong in knowing that everything that I've read in God's Word and everything that I've experienced with my Lord is *true*. And like those first disciples, *that* is what keeps me going.

So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.
LUKE 24:15

What a delicious sweetness exists between us when we meditate and talk together about the things God is revealing! It is as if Jesus Himself pulls up a chair and joins us, pointing out even more wonders and insights. When those times are over, it leaves everything in our lives drenched in the refreshing dews of His presence. Our taste buds are sharpened, our sense of touch is heightened, our bodies are made aware of sensations that went unnoticed before. We can hear each other breathe, feel each other smile even in the dark, smell the presence of joy.

What a shame it would be to let Satan entice us to choose a substitute, counterfeit pleasure for this amazing reality.



is the third day since these things happened. 22Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. 23When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

25Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

The Disciples' Eyes Opened

28Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. 29But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

30Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it,* and gave it to them. 31Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

32And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" 33So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, 34saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

36Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." 37But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. 38And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

40When He had said this, He showed

them His hands and His feet.[a] 41But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" 42So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.[a] 43And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

The Scriptures Opened

44Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." 45And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

46Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise[a] from the dead the third day, 47and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48And you are witnesses of these things. 49Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem[a] until you are endued with power from on high."

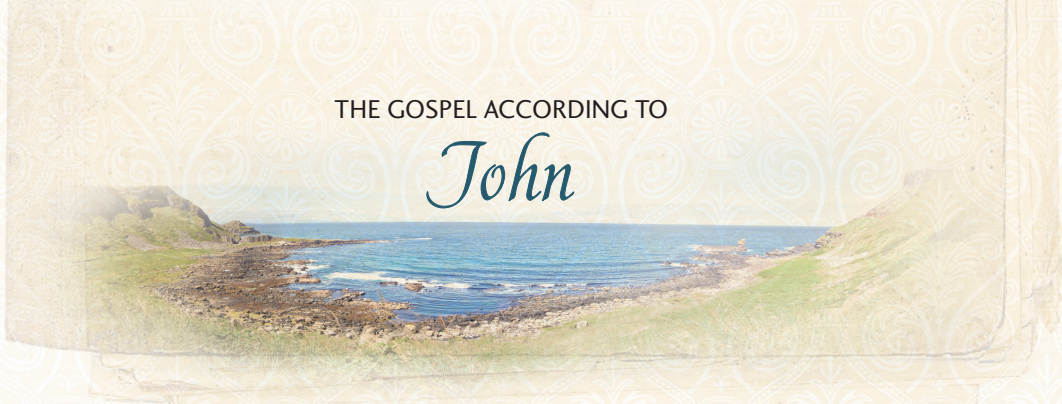
The Ascension

50And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53and were continually in the temple praising and[a] blessing God. Amen.[b]

24:40 [a]Some printed New Testaments omit this verse. It is found in nearly all Greek manuscripts. **24:42** [a]NU-Text omits *and some honeycomb.* **24:46** [a]NU-Text reads *written, that the Christ should suffer and rise.* **24:49** [a]NU-Text omits *of Jerusalem.* **24:53** [a]NU-Text omits *praising and.* [b]NU-Text omits *Amen.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

John



The Eternal Word

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the
Word was with God, and the Word was
God. 2He was in the beginning with God.
3All things were made through Him, and
without Him nothing was made that was
made. 4In Him was life, and the life was the
light of men. 5And the light shines in the
darkness, and the darkness did not com-
prehend[a] it.

John's Witness: The True Light

6There was a man sent from God, whose
name *was* John. 7This man came for a wit-
ness, to bear witness of the Light, that all
through him might believe. 8He was not that
Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that
Light. 9That was the true Light which gives
light to every man coming into the world.[a]

10He was in the world, and the world was
made through Him, and the world did not
know Him. 11He came to His own,[a] and His
own[b] did not receive Him. 12But as many as
received Him, to them He gave the right
to become children of God, to those who
believe in His name: 13who were born, not
of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of
the will of man, but of God.

The Word Becomes Flesh

14And the Word became flesh and dwelt
among us, and we beheld His glory, the
glory as of the only begotten of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

15John bore witness of Him and cried
out, saying, "This was He of whom I said,
'He who comes after me is preferred before
me, for He was before me.'"

16And[a] of His fullness we have all received,
and grace for grace. 17For the law was given
through Moses, *but* grace and truth came
through Jesus Christ. 18No one has seen
God at any time. The only begotten Son,[a]
who is in the bosom of the Father, He has
declared *Him.*

A Voice in the Wilderness

19Now this is the testimony of John,
when the Jews sent priests and Levites
from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

20He confessed, and did not deny, but
confessed, "I am not the Christ."

21And they asked him, "What then? Are
you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he answered, "No."

22Then they said to him, "Who are you,
that we may give an answer to those who
sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

23He said: "I *am*

'The voice of one crying in the
wilderness:
"Make straight the way of the LORD*,"* [a]

as the prophet Isaiah said."

24Now those who were sent were from
the Pharisees. 25And they asked him, say-
ing, "Why then do you baptize if you are not
the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26John answered them, saying, "I baptize
with water, but there stands One among you
whom you do not know. 27It is He who, com-
ing after me, is preferred before me, whose
sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."

28These things were done in Bethabara[a]
beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The Lamb of God

29The next day John saw Jesus coming
toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb
of God who takes away the sin of the world!

1:5 [a]Or *overcome* **1:9** [a]Or *That was the true Light which, coming into the world, gives light to every man.* **1:11** [a]That is, His own things or domain [b]That is, His own people **1:16** [a]NU-Text reads *For.* **1:18** [a]NU-Text reads *only begotten God.* **1:23** [a]Isaiah 40:3 **1:28** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Bethany.*

30This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes
a Man who is preferred before me, for He
was before me.' 31I did not know Him; but
that He should be revealed to Israel, there-
fore I came baptizing with water."

32And John bore witness, saying, "I saw
the Spirit descending from heaven like a
dove, and He remained upon Him. 33I did
not know Him, but He who sent me to
baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom
you see the Spirit descending, and remain-
ing on Him, this is He who baptizes with
the Holy Spirit.' 34And I have seen and tes-
tified that this is the Son of God."

The First Disciples

35Again, the next day, John stood with two
of his disciples. 36And looking at Jesus as He
walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

37The two disciples heard him speak,
and they followed Jesus. 38Then Jesus
turned, and seeing them following, said to
them, "What do you seek?"

They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to
say, when translated, Teacher), "where are
You staying?"

39He said to them, "Come and see."
They came and saw where He was staying,
and remained with Him that day (now it
was about the tenth hour).

40One of the two who heard John *speak,*
and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon
Peter's brother. 41He first found his own
brother Simon, and said to him, "We have
found the Messiah" (which is translated,
the Christ). 42And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said,
"You are Simon the son of Jonah.[a] You shall
be called Cephas" (which is translated, A
Stone).

Philip and Nathanael

43The following day Jesus wanted to go
to Galilee, and He found Philip and said
to him, "Follow Me." 44Now Philip was from
Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.
45Philip found Nathanael and said to him,
"We have found Him of whom Moses in the
law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of
Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46And Nathanael said to him, "Can any-
thing good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said to him, "Come and see."

47Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward
Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite
indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

48Nathanael said to Him, "How do You
know me?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Before
Philip called you, when you were under
the fig tree, I saw you."

49Nathanael answered and said to Him,
"Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are
the King of Israel!"

50Jesus answered and said to him,
"Because I said to you, 'I saw you under
the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see
greater things than these." 51And He said
to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, here-
after[a] you shall see heaven open, and the
angels of God ascending and descending
upon the Son of Man."

Water Turned to Wine

2 On the third day there was a wedding
in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of
Jesus was there. 2Now both Jesus and His
disciples were invited to the wedding. 3And
when they ran out of wine, the mother of
Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

4Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does
your concern have to do with Me? My
hour has not yet come."

5His mother said to the servants,
"Whatever He says to you, do *it.*"

6Now there were set there six waterpots
of stone, according to the manner of puri-
fication of the Jews, containing twenty or
thirty gallons apiece. 7Jesus said to them,
"Fill the waterpots with water." And they
filled them up to the brim. 8And He said
to them, "Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to
the master of the feast." And they took *it.*
9When the master of the feast had tasted
the water that was made wine, and did not
know where it came from (but the servants
who had drawn the water knew), the master
of the feast called the bridegroom. 10And
he said to him, "Every man at the begin-
ning sets out the good wine, and when the
guests have well drunk, then the inferior.
You have kept the good wine until now!"

11This beginning of signs Jesus did in
Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory;
and His disciples believed in Him.

1:42 [a]NU-Text reads *John.* **1:51** [a]NU-Text omits *hereafter.*

12 After this He went down to Capernaum,
He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at
hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
14 And He found in the temple those who
sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the
money changers doing business. 15 When
He had made a whip of cords, He drove
them all out of the temple, with the sheep
and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.
16 And He said to those who sold doves,
"Take these things away! Do not make My
Father's house a house of merchandise!"
17 Then His disciples remembered that it
was written, *"Zeal for Your house has eaten*[a] *Me up."*[b]
18 So the Jews answered and said to Him,
"What sign do You show to us, since You do
these things?"
19 Jesus answered and said to them,
"Destroy this temple, and in three days I
will raise it up."
20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-
six years to build this temple, and will You
raise it up in three days?"
21 But He was speaking of the temple of
His body. 22 Therefore, when He had risen
from the dead, His disciples remembered
that He had said this to them;[a] and they

2:17 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *will eat.* [b]Psalm 69:9 **2:22** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them.*



MARK LOWRY • Homecoming Artist, the *Gaither Vocal Band*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. | JOHN 1:1

Words are like seeds. They grow where they're planted. Some fall on hard places and die. Some the birds eat. Some words, just like seeds, find fertile soil . . . and grow.

What I write here are the fallible words. In a year or two I may not totally agree with what I write here. I say *totally agree* because there are things I said years ago that I wouldn't say today. The Jesus I came to know as a child is the same Jesus I know today, but the revelation of Him has been expanded. He hasn't changed, but what I know about Him has. He's a lot nicer than they ever told me.

Look over there. Those words and paragraphs with little numbers next to them. They're the infallible words. The words we write here are commentary and very fallible. John 1:1 explains that Jesus is the Word of God. The Bible is not the Word of God, Jesus is. Jesus is the perfect picture of the Father. As you read this Book, try to read it through the lens of Jesus. Let Him speak to your heart. Look for Him on every page. He's there.

If you study this Book, read this Book, memorize this Book, and never meet its Author, you've missed the point. If the Bible doesn't lay you in the lap of Jesus, it hasn't done its job. Jesus is the Word of God.

believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

The Discerner of Hearts

[23]Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. [24]But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men,* [25]and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

The New Birth

3 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. [2]This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

[3]Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

[4]Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

[5]Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. [6]That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. [7]Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' [8]The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

[9]Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

[10]Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? [11]Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. [12]If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? [13]No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is,* the Son of Man who is in heaven.[a] [14]And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, [15]that whoever believes in Him should not perish but[a] have eternal life. [16]For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. [17]For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

[18]"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [19]And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. [20]For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. [21]But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

John the Baptist Exalts Christ

[22]After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. [23]Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. [24]For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

[25]Then there arose a dispute between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. [26]And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

[27]John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. [28]You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' [29]He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. [30]He must increase, but I *must* decrease. [31]He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. [32]And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.

3:13 [a]NU-Text omits *who is in heaven.* **3:15** [a]NU-Text omits *not perish but.*

[33]He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. [34]For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. [35]The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. [36]He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

A Samaritan Woman Meets Her Messiah

4 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John [2](though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), [3]He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. [4]But He needed to go through Samaria.

[5]So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. [6]Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

[7]A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." [8]For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

[9]Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

[10]Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

[11]The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? [12]Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. | JOHN 1:14

One night we were part of a Gaither Homecoming concert at Melon Arena in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I always have difficulty finding my way in those big arenas. That night was no different. As I was making my way to our product table, I realized that we had been in this arena several times before with the Homecoming Friends. I recalled one night in particular. It was a Christmas concert, and when I reached the product table that night a young woman was waiting for me. She looked at me and blurted out, "I saw you on the stage and heard what you said and what you sang, and I feel that I can ask you this question. Is there really anything to what you all are singing and talking about?" I was thrilled to be able to answer "Yes. Oh, yes!" and I shared the gospel of Jesus with that young woman. She asked a few more questions and then went away seemingly pondering what she had heard. Later that night as the people in that packed arena beautifully blended

[13]Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, [14]but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

[15]The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

[16]Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

[17]The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' [18]for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

[19]The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. [20]Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

[21]Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. [22]You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. [23]But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. [24]God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

[25]The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

[26]Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

The Whitened Harvest

[27]And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

their voices in "O Little Town of Bethlehem," I recalled a quote I once read: "The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable." In 1868, Phillips Brooks captured the depth of the Christmas event in his writing, "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie. Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the Everlasting Light. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight."

Into the night and stillness of a small town came the Light of the World that would begin to overcome darkness. Once the ancient prophets had spoken the Word of the Lord through Jeremiah or Isaiah, or God had spoken through the holy books of old, but that night in Bethlehem the only begotten Son of God was born; the Word of the Lord was alive and in the world. The birth of Jesus becomes our own personal gift from God when we open ourselves meekly and humbly to the truth that if we so desire, Christ's spirit will live in us.

I trust that the lady I talked to so many Christmases ago has experienced the prayer in the last verse of the song: "O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray. Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today." That's the journey from Bethlehem to your heart and mine.

Gospel Songs

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

JOHN 3:16

DURING A trying time in his faith, George Bennard determined to set his eyes upon Scripture and the Cross for clarity and peace. "The Old Rugged Cross" resulted from his resolve. Through the ministry of the Salvation Army, Bennard's heart was turned to the Lord at a young age, and he quickly felt called to evangelism. He could not, however, heed the call to ministry just yet. When Bennard was sixteen, his father died, and Bennard had responsibilities with his family. Years later, he did get the opportunity and served faithfully as an evangelist with the Salvation Army and the Methodist Episcopal church. As happens with many ministers of the gospel, Bennard experienced some difficulty which led him to stringently focus his mind upon the Cross. When considering the sufferings in his own life and those of Christ on the Cross, Bennard later remembered, "I was praying for a full understanding of the Cross . . . I read and studied and prayed . . . The Cross of Christ became more than a symbol . . . It was like seeing John 3:16 leave the printed page, take form, and act out the meaning of redemption. While watching this scene with my mind's eye, the theme of the song came to me, and with it the melody." Bennard came to understand that it is only through God's love that a hill of execution could become a place of hope, and a bloody wooden cross beam "a wondrous beauty."

The Old Rugged Cross

George Bennard, 1913

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Refrain:
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary.

Refrain

In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see,
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.

Refrain

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true;
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away,
Where His glory forever I'll share.

Refrain

28 The woman then left her waterpot,
went her way into the city, and said to the
men, 29 "Come, see a Man who told me all
things that I ever did. Could this be the
Christ?" 30 Then they went out of the city
and came to Him.
31 In the meantime His disciples urged
Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."
32 But He said to them, "I have food to
eat of which you do not know."
33 Therefore the disciples said to one
another, "Has anyone brought Him *any-
thing* to eat?"
34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do
the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish
His work. 35 Do you not say, 'There are still
four months and *then* comes the harvest'?
Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and
look at the fields, for they are already white
for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives
wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life,
that both he who sows and he who reaps
may rejoice together. 37 For in this the say-
ing is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'
38 I sent you to reap that for which you have
not labored; others have labored, and you
have entered into their labors."

The Savior of the World

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city
believed in Him because of the word of the
woman who testified, "He told me all that I
ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans had come
to Him, they urged Him to stay with them;
and He stayed there two days. 41 And many
more believed because of His own word.
42 Then they said to the woman, "Now
we believe, not because of what you said,
for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we
know that this is indeed the Christ,[a] the
Savior of the world."

Welcome at Galilee

43 Now after the two days He departed
from there and went to Galilee. 44 For Jesus

4:42 [a]NU-Text omits *the Christ*.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." | JOHN 2:3

This miracle took place at a wedding. The married couple did not expect to run out of wine at their wedding ceremony. I am certain that preparations were made beforehand to ensure there was an ample supply for all of the guests. I am certain that when a man marries a woman today, they assume that they will have what it takes and that they will not run out of supplies. The fact is, nobody comes to a marriage well-supplied. I am speaking spiritually. A man might think, *I will have all of the love necessary for my marriage; I will always be patient and understanding; I will never run out of sensitivity and romance*. Sadly, like the wine at the wedding of Cana, we do run out. Jesus rescued the wedding and He can rescue the marriage. He is there to supernaturally supply all that is lacking. He loves to reenact His salvation and provide for every deficiency.

Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

A Nobleman's Son Healed

46So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

49The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

50Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. 51And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him,* saying, "Your son lives!"

52Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

54This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda

5 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep *Gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda,[a] having five porches. 3In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. 4For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.[a] 5Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. 6When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

7The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

8Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." 9And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

And that day was the Sabbath. 10The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

11He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'"

12Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" 13But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in *that* place. 14Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

15The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Honor the Father and the Son

16For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him,[a] because He had done these things on the Sabbath. 17But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

18Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. 19Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. 20For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. 21For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them,* even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

5:2 [a]NU-Text reads *Bethzatha.* **5:4** [a]NU-Text omits *waiting for the moving of the water* at the end of verse 3, and all of verse 4. **5:16** [a]NU-Text omits *and sought to kill Him.*

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son

24"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who
hears My word and believes in Him who
sent Me has everlasting life, and shall
not come into judgment, but has passed
from death into life. 25Most assuredly, I
say to you, the hour is coming, and now
is, when the dead will hear the voice of
the Son of God; and those who hear will
live. 26For as the Father has life in Himself,
so He has granted the Son to have life in
Himself, 27and has given Him authority
to execute judgment also, because He is
the Son of Man. 28Do not marvel at this;
for the hour is coming in which all who
are in the graves will hear His voice 29and
come forth—those who have done good,
to the resurrection of life, and those who
have done evil, to the resurrection of con-
demnation. 30I can of Myself do nothing.
As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is right-
eous, because I do not seek My own will
but the will of the Father who sent Me.

The Fourfold Witness

31"If I bear witness of Myself, My wit-
ness is not true. 32There is another who
bears witness of Me, and I know that the



RUSS TAFF • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Formerly with *The Imperials* and the *Gaither Vocal Band*

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. | JOHN 4:23, 24

In the year 1611, Nicholas Herman was born into poverty in the Lorraine region of France. At the age of eighteen, he became a soldier and fought in the Thirty Years' War. When he was twenty-four, he entered the Discalced Carmelite Priory in Paris, where he became known as Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection. Since he had no formal education, he wasn't allowed to be a cleric, so most of his life was spent washing dishes and repairing sandals. In spite of his humble position, he was such a man of peace and wisdom that people sought him out for spiritual guidance. After his death his writings were turned into one of the classic memoirs of the devotional life, *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

This small book was given to me by a pastor over ten years ago and quickly became one of my favorites. It challenges me to continually stay in God's presence and make Him the center of my attention throughout my day—which to be honest, takes a lot more effort than I thought it would! Brother Lawrence apparently agreed, because this book talks a lot about how the distractions of daily life can make it hard to stay focused on God, even in a monastery. "At all times, every hour, every minute, even at the busiest times I drove away from my mind everything capable of spoiling the sense of the presence of God," he wrote. "I just made it my business to persevere in His holy presence."

witness which He witnesses of Me is true.
33You have sent to John, and he has borne
witness to the truth. 34Yet I do not receive
testimony from man, but I say these things
that you may be saved. 35He was the burn-
ing and shining lamp, and you were willing
for a time to rejoice in his light. 36But I have
a greater witness than John's; for the works
which the Father has given Me to finish—
the very works that I do—bear witness of
Me, that the Father has sent Me. 37And the
Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified
of Me. You have neither heard His voice at
any time, nor seen His form. 38But you do
not have His word abiding in you, because
whom He sent, Him you do not believe.
39You search the Scriptures, for in them you
think you have eternal life; and these are
they which testify of Me. 40But you are not
willing to come to Me that you may have life.
41"I do not receive honor from men. 42But
I know you, that you do not have the love
of God in you. 43I have come in My Father's
name, and you do not receive Me; if another
comes in his own name, him you will receive.
44How can you believe, who receive honor
from one another, and do not seek the honor
that *comes* from the only God? 45Do not

When I'm able to discipline myself and actually put into practice these ideas, the quality of my life increases at least a hundredfold. In fact, I believe this is what we are created for—to have what Brother Lawrence called "a habitual, silent, secret conversation with God." I try my best to follow the example of that long-ago brother in Christ. He recognized spiritual longing, embraced the struggle that came with it and found his peace. "My soul has come to its own home and place of rest," he wrote. Brother Lawrence lived in the monastery the rest of his days until the age of eighty when he was described as "dying in relative obscurity and pain and perfect joy."

One asks the question, "What should we set as our ultimate goal in this life?" His answer is to become the most perfect worshipers of God we can possibly be. To me that means that I will seek no more than how to be God's and God's alone. My goal made me resolve to give my all for the All. I worship Him as often as I can, keeping my mind in His holy presence. When I wander I bring Him back to my mind. I make it my business to persevere in His holy presence. My soul has had a "habitual, silent, secret conversation with God." Brother Lawrence admitted that the path to this perfect union was not easy. He spent years disciplining his heart and mind to yield to God's presence. He wrote "as often as I could, I placed myself as a worshiper before him, fixing my mind upon His holy presence."

Only when he reconciled himself to the thought that this struggle and longing was his destiny did he find a new peace—his soul "had come to its own home and place of rest."

He has helped me focus through the day, hour by hour, keeping my mind on Jesus, His love, His presence, His plans for my life.

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

JOHN 6:37

"I used to go to church, but it's been so long. I'm afraid to go back." "I want to reconnect with God, but I need to straighten out my life first." How many people have delayed their own redemption by falsely believing they need to make themselves worthy before God would ever want them? Charlotte Elliot was one of these people. An invalid, she had festered in bitterness and despair for years when a minister visited her family's home, and after arguing with him, she finally believed that God didn't want anything from her but her, just as she was. Rather than hiding from the Lord, she could bring pain, weakness, anger, and resentment *to* Him, and He would take care of it. And so she did finally relinquish her life to the Lord, convinced of His power and His desire to cleanse her from her sins.

Throughout the following years, Elliott still battled her emotions and difficult health, but her faith in God sustained. Many years later, her brother, Reverend Henry Elliot, was holding a bazaar to raise funds to educate children of poor clergy. The day of the bazaar, Elliot longed to help but found herself once again engulfed in feelings of uselessness and she was plagued with doubt and despair. But rather than give in to it, she asserted to herself the truth of her salvation. And she began to write "Just as I Am." The hymn appeared in a leaflet for that fundraiser, and it continues to articulate the message of Jesus Christ, that no matter who you are, "the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."

Just as I Am

Charlotte Elliot | 1835

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

2. Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse
each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

4. Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

5. Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

6. Just as I am, Thy love unknown
Hath broken every barrier down;
Now, to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

7. Just as I am, of that free love
The breadth, length, depth, and
height to prove,
Here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. 46For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Feeding the Five Thousand

6After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea* of Tiberias. 2Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. 3And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

4Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. 5Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" 6But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

7Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."

8One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 9"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

10Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples[a] to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. 12So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." 13Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. 14Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

Jesus Walks on the Sea

15Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

16Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, 17got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. 18Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. 19So when they had rowed about three or four miles,[a] they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. 20But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

The Bread from Heaven

22On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered,[a] and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— 23however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— 24when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. 25And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"

26Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

28Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

29Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

30Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? 31Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, *'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'*"[a]

6:11 [a]NU-Text omits *to the disciples, and the disciples.* **6:19** [a]Literally *twenty-five or thirty stadia* **6:22** [a]NU-Text omits *that* and *which His disciples had entered.* **6:31** [a]Exodus 16:4; Nehemiah 9:15; Psalm 78:24

[32]Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. [33]For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

[34]Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

[35]And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. [36]But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. [37]All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. [38]For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. [39]This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. [40]And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Rejected by His Own

[41]The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." [42]And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

[43]Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. [44]No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. [45]It is written in the prophets, *'And they shall all be taught by God.'*[a] Therefore everyone who has heard and learned[b] from the Father comes to Me. [46]Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. [47]Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me[a] has everlasting life. [48]I am the bread of life. [49]Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. [50]This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. [51]I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

[52]The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?"

[53]Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. [54]Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. [55]For My flesh is food indeed,[a] and My blood is drink indeed. [56]He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. [57]As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. [58]This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

[59]These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Turn Away

[60]Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this,* said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

[61]When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? [62]*What* then if you should see the Son of Man ascend

6:45 [a]Isaiah 54:13 [b]M-Text reads *hears and has learned.* **6:47** [a]NU-Text omits *in Me.* **6:55** [a]NU-Text reads *true food* and *true drink.*



where He was before? [63]It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. [64]But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. [65]And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

[66]From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. [67]Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

[68]But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. [69]Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."[a]

[70]Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" [71]He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Jesus' Brothers Disbelieve

7 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews[a] sought to kill Him. [2]Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. [3]His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. [4]For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." [5]For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

6:69 [a]NU-Text reads *You are the Holy One of God.* **7:1** [a]That is, the ruling authorities



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. | JOHN 8:12

The wonderful, warm summer nights in the country remind me of our North Carolina farm when I was growing up. My Dad always tended the barns at night, and occasionally, he would let me go with him. More often, though, he would go alone. After supper, I'd watch him get the lantern, leave the house, and head for the barn.

My husband and I still live on a farm, and we have a couple of security lights that light the space between our home and the barn, but in the forties and early fifties kerosene lanterns were treated with utmost respect. That meant "hands off" to children. I don't know how long my parents had the old black lantern, but I remember when Daddy replaced it with a new green one. It wasn't long before the encasement was covered with as much dust and dirt as the black one, but Mama always kept the glass globe clean so the light would not be hindered. As darkness would fall, I stood with my face pressed against the door pane watching for Daddy to come back from the barn. Soon I'd see a flicker of light in the distance. I could not see the road or the barn.

[6]Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. [7]The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. [8]You go up to this feast. I am not yet[a] going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." [9]When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

The Heavenly Scholar

[10]But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. [11]Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?" [12]And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people." [13]However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

[14]Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. [15]And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

[16]Jesus[a] answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. [17]If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority.* [18]He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. [19]Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

[20]The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

[21]Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. [22]Moses

7:8 [a]NU-Text omits *yet*. **7:16** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *So Jesus*.

I couldn't see my dad or the lantern he was holding, but I could very distinctly see the light. I knew that our daddy was on his way back to us.

Light is powerful and wonderful. We are drawn to light. Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). My dad held high the lantern so that its light would illuminate his pathway. In a similar way, when we come to accept Jesus, we immediately receive light from the original source that both illuminates our pathway and reflects His presence from within.

A friend of mine told of going through a tollbooth on the interstate at which the attendant was not very courteous; in fact, she was rather rude when taking his money and making his change. My friend's day had been stressful, and he impulsively reacted in the same manner. As he drove away from the tollbooth the Holy Spirit whispered to him, "I wanted her to see me and all she saw was you."

Maybe the tollbooth attendant was having a stressful day, too. Philippians 2:15 says "That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."

Matthew 5:16 instructs us to share our light with others. We are to radiate this light so that it lights the way to God for our family, friends, associates, neighbors, community, city, nation, and beyond. God's light goes with us, one step at a time, so that we can penetrate the darkness along the way.

There's Something About That Name

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. There's just something about that name.
Master, Savior, Jesus—like the fragrance after the rain;
Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Let all heaven and earth proclaim!
Kings and kingdoms will all pass away,
But there's something about that name.

Spoken: Jesus. The mere mention of His name can calm the storm, heal the broken, raise the dead. At the name of Jesus, I've seen sin-hardened men melted, derelicts transformed, the lights of hope put back into the eyes of a hopeless child. . . .

At the name of Jesus, hatred and bitterness turn to love and forgiveness; arguments cease.

I've heard a mother softly breathe His name at the bedside of a child delirious from fever, and I've watched as that little body grew quiet and the fevered brow became cool.

I've sat beside a dying saint, her body racked with pain, who in those final fleeting seconds summoned her last ounce of ebbing strength to whisper earth's sweetest name: "Jesus, Jesus. . . ."

Emperors have tried to destroy it; philosophies have tried to stamp it out. Tyrants have tried to wash it from the face of the earth with the very blood of those who claimed it. Yet still it stands.

And there shall be the final day when every voice that has ever uttered a sound—every voice of Adam's race—shall rise in one mighty chorus to proclaim the name of Jesus, for in that day every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is truly Lord!

So, you see, it was not mere chance that caused the angel one night long ago to say to a virgin maiden, "His name shall be called Jesus."

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. There is something—something about that name.

Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

JOHN 8:58

A name is a symbol for the essence of the person or the thing named. The name and the reality must match. Throughout Scripture God placed a great deal of importance on names. Often He renamed persons who were better than their names. Others He held responsible for living up to their names.

I, like those who walked with Him, have had to learn "how high, how wide, how very deep His love really is and experience it for [myself], though [I have] never seen the end of it or fully comprehend[ed] it."

When I was young we would sing "Jesus Is All I Need." I never really liked that song much. I argued in my mind whenever we sang it, *Well, I, for one, need a lot more. I need someone to love me. I need a warm body, a friendly face, someone to talk to at breakfast, and, more than that, someone who will talk back. I need quiet walks on the beach and a good cup of coffee with a friend to whom I don't have to explain myself.*

How shallow I was. Over the years I have come to notice that in the gospel accounts, whenever someone had a need, Jesus answered with the ancient God words: "I AM." And life is teaching me why Jesus answered with the words "I AM."

There is the woman at the well. As she lifts to the surface the heavy bucket brimming with sweet water, the stranger who has just asked her for a drink says, "If only you knew, you'd ask Me for a drink. This well is temporary, but I AM the Water that never runs dry, and I quench thirsts no water can satisfy."

Mary and Martha see Jesus coming down the dusty road to Bethany. They run to meet Him. Martha blurts out, "Our brother, Lazarus, is dead, and to tell you the truth, I just can't believe that You didn't come. What took You so long when You knew he was so sick? If You had been here, he would not have died!" "I AM the Resurrection and the Life," He says.

Bewildered by what is obviously a going-away party, Jesus' dearest friends begin to question. "I will be gone a while, then you will come where I AM," Jesus tells them, implying that there will be a space of distance or time or both when they will be separated and maybe disoriented. "How can we come to where You are?" asks Thomas. "We have no idea which way." "I AM the Way," He tells them.

"So!" shout the hired harassers. "So, You are the King of the Jews!" Crude laughter bends them double in derision. "So, are You the King?" Pilate asks, smirking at the ridiculous charade. "I AM," is all He answers. "So, what is the truth?" asks a cynical Pilate. Even shackles and thorns and wounds and humiliation cannot throttle His authority: "I AM the Truth."

And we, like them, come bringing

our protests. The hungry Peter in us says, "But we need someone to eat with, to share our deep hungers."

"I AM the Bread," says Jesus, and we somehow know that He is addressing not just our growling stomachs, but our ravenous minds and shriveled spirits.

The cynical Pilate in us says, "We need intellectual stimulation. We need answers to the questions that will not be stilled. We hunger to learn. We have to ask. We want the truth." Weary of being in charge of so many details and so many perplexities, we look around for someone to think for us. We're sick of "working out our own salvation"; this "fear and trembling" is getting wearisome. We look with horror at His disfigured body. Jesus straightens Himself, in spite of His agony, enough to look at us. He cannot reach for us. He is bound; He is powerless. Yet there is amazing power in His powerlessness. We see "King" emblazoned on His forehead. "For this purpose was I born, and for this cause came I into the world," is all He says before they lead Him away, carrying a heavy cross.

Frustrated, we wrap our dreams in grave clothes. Crying hot tears of grief, we set aside "what might have been." Yes, we agree with the poet, of all the words of tongue or pen, these are indeed the saddest.

Some who love us come to mourn the loss of our highest aspirations. Others appear to be mourners, but we know in reality they gloat, "Well, they've had more than their share. Now they know how we feel. We never even had a chance to dream."

We see Him coming and know His comfortable presence. We fling ourselves into His embrace. "Where were You?" we wail. "If You had been here . . . we needed Your presence but it's been so long. Why didn't You come to us? If You had been with us, our dreams would not have died!"

We feel His familiar, tender touch lifting our chins. Though we are blinded by hot tears, we cannot escape His eyes. "Daughter, Son, I AM the Resurrection and the Life." And then we know He is peering into the frozen tomb of our soul; He calls in a loud voice, "My beloved, come forth!" We feel a stirring, a surge of life forcing its way through congealed veins. There is a warming that goes clear to our toes. At His voice, we too live!

The miles I have walked since I began to learn the reality behind the name. There is power in the name of Jesus, because it is the name that still brings to our human existence all the qualities of the great "I AM." We will never comprehend the immensity of Yahweh, the I AM who spoke worlds into existence. But we can access it. They are the words that God speaks into the void that is in each of us. They are the answer to all questions.

When a child is delirious with fever, listen for Jesus' "I AM," and know He is the cooling hand on her brow. When bitterness and grudges rip families apart and cause tender hearts to harden, "I AM" is the power to heal and soften and restore trust. When the parents we love slip into eternity and we cannot call them back, we can be sure "I AM" is the first welcoming voice they will hear on the other side. When tyrants threaten our planet and wipe out whole populations, "*I am*" are the words we can cling to for sanity in an insane world.

When from the ashes of bitter disappointment, new dreams rise like a phoenix on the strong wings of a new morning, and when we look back down the long road of our lives and see piles of ash like altars built along our path, we can be sure Jesus is all we ever needed. There *is* something about that name.



therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? 24Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Could This Be the Christ?

25Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? 26But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly[a] the Christ? 27However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

28Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29But[a] I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

30Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. 31And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this *Man* has done?"

Jesus and the Religious Leaders

32The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. 33Then Jesus said to them,[a] "I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me. 34You will seek Me and not find *Me,* and where I am you cannot come."

35Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? 36What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

37On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing[a] in Him would receive; for the Holy[b] Spirit was not yet *given,* because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Who Is He?

40Therefore many[a] from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." 41Others said, "This is the Christ."

But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? 42Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" 43So there was a division among the people because of Him. 44Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

Rejected by the Authorities

45Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?"

46The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

47Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? 48Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? 49But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

50Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night,[a] being one of them) said to them, 51"Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

52They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen[a] out of Galilee."

An Adulteress Faces the Light of the World

53And everyone went to his *own* house.[a]

8 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

2Now early[a] in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. 3Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst,

7:26 [a]NU-Text omits *truly.* **7:29** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *But.* **7:33** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them.* **7:39** [a]NU-Text reads *who believed.* [b]NU-Text omits *Holy.* **7:40** [a]NU-Text reads *some.* **7:50** [a]NU-Text reads *before.* **7:52** [a]NU-Text reads *is to rise.* **7:53** [a]The words *And everyone* through *sin no more* (8:11) are bracketed by NU-Text as not original. They are present in over 900 manuscripts. **8:2** [a]M-Text reads *very early.*

[4]they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught[a] in adultery, in the very act. [5]Now Moses, in the law, commanded[a] us that such should be stoned.[b] But what do You say?"[c] [6]This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear.[a]

[7]So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up[a] and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." [8]And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. [9]Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience,[a] went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. [10]When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her,[a] "Woman, where are those accusers of yours?[b] Has no one condemned you?"

[11]She said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and[a] sin no more."

[12]Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who

8:4 [a]M-Text reads *we found this woman.* **8:5** [a]M-Text reads *in our law Moses commanded.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *to stone such.* [c]M-Text adds *about her.* **8:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *as though He did not hear.* **8:7** [a]M-Text reads *He looked up.* **8:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *being convicted by their conscience.* **8:10** [a]NU-Text omits *and saw no one but the woman;* M-Text reads *He saw her and said.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of yours.* **8:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *from now on.*



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. | JOHN 11:5

We can't say we haven't been warned. The story of Martha and Mary explains perfectly that there are two types of women in the world, not only in the world outside, but also the world inside. Every woman has both a Mary and a Martha living inside her mind and emotions. And very often they are fighting—slugging it out and making her miserable.

There is the splendid Martha. She is the nest maker, the practical worker. She loves to cook and clean and organize, making things nice for others to enjoy. Nothing in this world would run right if it were not for Martha. She is absolutely indispensable. Every lovely, orderly home in the world is because of Martha.

Then there is Mary. She is the one who brings the sunshine. She loves and thinks and laughs and dances and dreams. She is very impractical—but absolutely indispensable. Nobody would enjoy life if it were not for Mary.

We're blessed that every woman has both a Martha and a Mary in her makeup. The trick is to get them to quit fighting and to strike the proper balance. The world isn't helping much. It seems as though some of its propaganda is trying to turn us into Peter and John.

My prayer is that the Lord will guide every seeking female heart to the proper perspective, the proper balance between those two inward fighting sisters, Martha and Mary, for Jesus loves them both.

follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Jesus Defends His Self-Witness

[13]The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."

[14]Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. [15]You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. [16]And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. [17]It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. [18]I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

[19]Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"

Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

[20]These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

Jesus Predicts His Departure

[21]Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

[22]So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come'?"

[23]And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. [24]Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He,* you will die in your sins."

[25]Then they said to Him, "Who are You?"

And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. [26]I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

[27]They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

[28]Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He,* and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. [29]And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." [30]As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

The Truth Shall Make You Free

[31]Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. [32]And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

[33]They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, 'You will be made free'?"

[34]Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. [35]And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. [36]Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Abraham's Seed and Satan's

[37]"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. [38]I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with[a] your father."

[39]They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father."

Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. [40]But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. [41]You do the deeds of your father."

Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God."

[42]Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. [43]Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. [44]You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

8:38 [a]NU-Text reads *heard from.*

Fully Alive

Don't let me miss all the glory around me
Waiting for heaven someday to come;
Open my eyes to miraculous Mondays,
And make my feet march to eternity's drum.

Fully alive in Your Spirit;
Lord, make me fully alive!
Fully aware of Your presence, Lord,
Totally, fully alive!

Don't let me wait for some far-off forever
To say what I feel to the ones I hold dear,
Risking the pain and the joys of loving,
Keep me awake and alive while I'm here!

Help me to see in this moment my calling;
Don't let me wait for some "field far away."
Cries in my street, lives that are broken—
Lord, let me see them and touch them . . . today!

Fully alive in Your Spirit;
Lord, make me fully alive!
Fully aware of Your presence, Lord,
Totally, fully alive!



I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

JOHN 10:10

One morning, on my way to get my hair trimmed, I stopped for breakfast and a cup of hot coffee at the local pancake house. I intended to steal a moment to be alone before the day began and its many demands crowded my time and took their bite of my energies. "Just an egg and a homemade biscuit," I told the waitress, "and a coffee, please." I handed back the menu and turned to the book I'd brought to jump-start my mind.

I had barely finished the second page before she returned with my breakfast. *Fast*, I thought. She poured the coffee and asked if there'd be anything else. "No, I'm fine, thank you," I answered, my eyes really looking into hers for the first time.

She smiled. "Enjoy!" she said, then hurried back to deliver someone else's order.

"Enjoy!" Her final word hung in the air above my corner booth like a blessing—and more. It was a sermon of sorts. The taste of a fresh egg and a warm biscuit. The warmth of a cup of hot coffee in my hands on this Winnie-the-Pooh blustery day. The colors, the textures, the aromas, the voices, the morning music that surrounded me. "Enjoy!"

It was a choice she had offered me. I could go through this day oblivious to the miracles all around me or I could tune in and "enjoy!" Her invitation returned again and again to bless my day. As I lay back at the shampoo bowl, I noticed the fresh green apple smell of the conditioner; I "enjoyed" the scalp massage and the warm water—right from the tap—that was "blessing" my head, a luxury unknown in much of the world. "Mamaw!" Grandson Jesse's happy voice greeted me as I got out of the car. His strong little arms were already around my neck, and he was covering

my face with the kisses he'd recently learned to aim at a chosen target. I could hear, I could feel, I could see this precious, sturdy child who blessed my days with the joy of being adored—as only an innocent child can adore. I was his "mamaw"!

I looked out the window above the sink at the spring rain bathing the lilac bushes and just-planted pink geraniums around the lamppost. Two pairs of cardinals darted through the grape arbor and landed on the birdbath, where they tossed water drops up to blend with the drops still falling from the sky. "Enjoy!"

Bill came in the back door and dumped a pile of mail on the counter. "Got any soup left?" he asked, lifting the lid on the pot that simmered on the stove. He barely took a breath before he shared his excitement about the way the new video he was editing was coming together. Tears welled up in his eyes as he described how powerful the spontaneous testimonies were at our last *Homecoming Friends* filming. "God is doing something bigger than all of us," he said with awe in his voice. "We're just privileged to be at the right place at the right time to see it."

Enjoy! I thought.

Jesus intended for us to be overwhelmed by the blessings of regular days. He said it was the reason He had come: "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Each day, each moment is so pregnant with eternity that if we tune in to it, we can hardly contain the joy. I have a feeling this is what happened to Moses when he saw the burning bush. Maybe Yahweh performed laser surgery on his eyes so he could see what was always there, and Moses was just so overwhelmed with the glory of God that the very ground he stood on became infused with holiness, and the bushes along the mountain path burned with splendor. Whatever happened, the burning bush experience also sharpened Moses' awareness of the pain of his people in the light of God's presence.

Bill's dad was always reminding us that "this ain't the rehearsal, kids. It's the real thing. Don't miss it while it's happening." Pain and pleasure, laughter and tears are all around us too, if we can see them and respond to them.

Several years ago we had written a song that went through my mind again that day as I sipped my coffee and watched the rain streaming down the window: "Fully alive in Your Spirit; Lord, make me fully alive!" I'd heard a lot of sermons in my day, but the best sermon I'd heard in a long time was preached in one word by a busy waitress as she poured a cup of coffee. God has given us this day. I don't want to miss it. Enjoy!



When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources,* for he is a liar and the father of it. 45But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

Before Abraham Was, I AM

48Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

49Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. 50And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges. 51Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

52Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' 53Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

54Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your[a] God. 55Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. 56Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad."

57Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

58Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

59Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple,[a] going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

A Man Born Blind Receives Sight

9 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. 4I[a] must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work. 5As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

6When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

8Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind[a] said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?"

9Some said, "This is he." Others *said,* "He is like him."[a]

He said, "I am *he*."

10Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

11He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of[a] Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight."

12Then they said to him, "Where is He?"

He said, "I do not know."

The Pharisees Excommunicate the Healed Man

13They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. 14Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

16Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."

Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

17They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?"

He said, "He is a prophet."

18But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of

8:54 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *our.* **8:59** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **9:4** [a]NU-Text reads *We.* **9:8** [a]NU-Text reads *a beggar.* **9:9** [a]NU-Text reads *"No, but he is like him."* **9:11** [a]NU-Text omits *the pool of.*

him who had received his sight. [19]And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

[20]His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; [21]but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." [22]His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that* He *was* Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. [23]Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

[24]So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner."

[25]He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner *or not* I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

[26]Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

[27]He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

[28]Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. [29]We know that God spoke to Moses; *as for* this *fellow,* we do not know where He is from."

[30]The man answered and said to them,



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save Me from this hour"? But for this purpose I came to this hour. | JOHN 12:27

Once on a cold winter's night, I was awakened from a sound sleep by the voice of my husband calling out sharply, "Laura!" It was a warning tone of voice that he would use if I suddenly stepped in front of a moving car. He was not in the room or even in the house, but many miles away on tour. I was instantly awake and sat up to see what was wrong. Moving around cautiously to check things out, I saw footprints in the snow where someone had been standing outside my bedroom window. A voice of love had called out to warn me of danger.

I believe that it was angelic protection, but the angel had chosen to use the one voice I would respond to instantly—the voice of my love. A stranger's voice would have been confusing and the meaning misunderstood—but not that voice.

In the tenth chapter of John, we who belong to the Lord are spoken of as His sheep. The fourteenth verse says, "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own." And the sixteenth verse says, "And they will hear My voice."

He wants us to know Him so well that we will instantly know His voice. He desires that His voice be so familiar to us, we can easily discern its meaning. It may be easier than we realize, for it is always easy to understand the voice of love.

If You Had Been There!

GLORIA GAITHER

An empty house where laughter once
had rung . . .
A child's room vacant except for one
broken toy . . .
A brown bottle in a dusty corner, silent
symbol of ruthless tyrant . . .

O Lord, if you had been there . . . !

Once-human voices bemoaning some
"unpardonable sin" . . .
Sane façades miserably betrayed by
insane eyes and hands . . .
The sterile corridors of a sterile hell . . .

O Lord, if you had been there . . . !

The sickening brown and red of mud
and blood . . .
Young thighs, twisted and
bullet-ridden . . .
A conference table encircled by fat,
unyielding faces . . .

O Lord, if you had been there . . . !

An aged child scurrying into an alley
with stolen
loot . . .
A brick-strewn street lined with
angry faces . . .
A weeping mother bending over a
blue-uniformed corpse . . .

O Lord, if you had been there . . . !

The silence of words never uttered . . .
The silence of no words to utter . . .
The silence that follows too
many words,
Too quickly uttered . . .

O Lord, if you had been there . . . !

A little while longer the light is with you.
Walk while you have the light,
lest darkness overtake you;
he who walks in darkness does not
know where he is going.
While you have the light,
believe in the light, that you
may become sons of light.
JOHN 12:35, 36

Now there is a window of Light—a window of opportunity. The Light moves. If we walk in it we make progress. The Light is not for basking and lying around; the Light is to illuminate our path. If we stay in the Light, we must move with the Light. If we refuse to go where the Light is going, gradually we will be left in total darkness. Where the Light is, we must work. Whatever the Light reveals that we need to do, we must do with no holding back. We must do the work and move ahead with the Light. There are many good moments; but we must not worship the moments; while we are worshiping them, the Light moves on, and we will not have done the work for which this moment was provided. But if we work and walk in and with the Light . . . the Light for us shines forever!



"Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! 31Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

34They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

True Vision and True Blindness

35Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"[a]

36He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

37And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

38Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

39And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

40Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

41Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

Jesus the True Shepherd

10 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

9:35 [a]NU-Text reads *Son of Man.*

Jesus the Good Shepherd

7Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8All who *ever* came before Me[a] are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

11"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep,* and am known by My own. 15As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.

17"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

19Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. 20And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?"

21Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

The Shepherd Knows His Sheep

22Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. 23And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. 24Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

25Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. 26But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.[a] 27My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. 30I and *My* Father are one."

Renewed Efforts to Stone Jesus

31Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

33The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

34Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, *'I said, "You are gods"'*?[a] 35If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe[a] that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him." 39Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

The Believers Beyond Jordan

40And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. 41Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." 42And many believed in Him there.

The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

10:8 [a]M-Text omits *before Me.* **10:26** [a]NU-Text omits *as I said to you.*
10:34 [a]Psalm 82:6 **10:38** [a]NU-Text reads *understand.*

4When Jesus heard *that,* He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

5Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7Then after this He said to *the* disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8*The* disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

9Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." 11These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

12Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." 13However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

14Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

16Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

17So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. 18Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles[a] away. 19And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20Now Martha, as soon as she heard

11:18 [a]Literally *fifteen stadia*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." | JOHN 13:8

I completely understand Peter's resistance to having the Lord Jesus wash his feet. It goes completely against logic. Jesus is the Lord! He is the Master! It makes sense that we should wash His feet. He is worthy! Should the God of heaven put on the slave's apron and stoop to wash the feet of His creatures? My heart naturally recoils at the suggestion as well. When our Lord Jesus threatened to have no part with him if he continued to resist, I do not believe Jesus was suggesting that Peter would lose his salvation. No! I think that Jesus was warning Peter of missing out on precious intimacy and deep fellowship with Him. If we do not let the Lord minister to us and serve us, we forfeit a close communion with Him. He wants to refresh us. I was taught that we were saved to serve the Lord. I believe this passage teaches us that we are saved to be served by the Lord in order that we might serve the Lord. Until He washes our feet, we are not prepared to wash one another's feet. My service is an outworking of His service. Before I can wash His feet, He is already washing my feet.

that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

23Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

27She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy

28And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." 29As soon as she heard *that,* she arose quickly and came to Him. 30Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was[a] in the place where Martha met Him. 31Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."[a]

32Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

33Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. 34And He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

35Jesus wept. 36Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

37And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

38Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days."

40Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" 41Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying.[a] And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this,* that they may believe that You sent Me." 43Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

45Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. 46But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. 47Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

49And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50nor do you consider that it is expedient for us[a] that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." 51Now this he did not say on his own *authority;* but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

53Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. 54Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

11:30 [a]NU-Text adds *still.* **11:31** [a]NU-Text reads *supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.* **11:41** [a]NU-Text omits *from the place where the dead man was lying.* **11:50** [a]NU-Text reads *you.*

55 And the Passover of the Jews was near,
and many went from the country up to
Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify
themselves. 56 Then they sought Jesus, and
spoke among themselves as they stood in
the temple, "What do you think—that He
will not come to the feast?" 57 Now both the
chief priests and the Pharisees had given a
command, that if anyone knew where He
was, he should report *it*, that they might
seize Him.

The Anointing at Bethany

12 Then, six days before the Passover,
Jesus came to Bethany, where Laz-
arus was who had been dead,[a] whom He
had raised from the dead. 2 There they
made Him a supper; and Martha served,
but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the
table with Him. 3 Then Mary took a pound
of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed
the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with

12:1 [a]NU-Text omits *who had been dead.*



RODNEY GRIFFIN • Homecoming Artist, *Greater Vision*

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. | JOHN 13:14–17

I love to write songs in the first person. I enjoy putting myself in someone else's shoes, and trying to feel what they felt at a particular moment. It's quite challenging to write this way because you take the risk of the listener not knowing exactly who you are portraying. You have to be very clear. If they don't pick right up with the story as you begin, they probably will not be able to follow you through to the ending. However, I took this chance in 1998 when I wanted to write about what could be called *the* most awkward moment in the history of mankind:

It started out as a normal night of fellowship. The disciples had prepared the Passover meal there in the Upper Room and everyone there was ready to enjoy . . . all except for one. He was the one with the hidden agenda. He was the evil planner. He was the betrayer. He was Judas. Taking his place there at the table, he planned his attack. While others were enthralled with the words of the Master, he was hearing the clang of thirty pieces of silver. That is, until Jesus broke the program, and came face-to-face with Satan. As only a holy, humble servant would, Jesus prepared a basin of water, girded Himself with a towel, and began, one by one, washing the disciples' feet. His goal: Judas. He and Judas were the only ones in the room who knew what was going on behind the scenes. It was classic darkness versus light. How would Jesus react to the one He knew would betray Him? Would He embarrass Judas by telling Judas' secret sin, and then refuse to wash Judas' feet because of it? (I've often wondered what went through Judas' mind at that moment.) Knowing he deserved scolding for what he would do to the Master, he watched Jesus with cautious eyes. Finally, the moment of truth came . . .

her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

4But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son,* who would betray Him, said, 5"Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii[a] and given to the poor?" 6This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

7But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept[a] this for the day of My burial. 8For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

The Plot to Kill Lazarus

9Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. 10But the chief priests plotted

12:5 [a]About one year's wages for a worker **12:7** [a]NU-Text reads *that she may keep.*

the most awkward moment in history. Purity knelt before the pathetic. Holiness knelt before hatred . . . and served him. Jesus carefully and lovingly washed the feet of the one who would soon lead Him to an old rugged cross.

Why did I write this song? What motivated me? If I were honest with you, I would tell you that it is because Judas and I have a lot in common. We've both dropped the ball when we should have carried it a little further. We've both turned our heads when someone needed us. We've both portrayed to be something we are not. But, thanks be to God, we have one more thing in common. . . . We've both had our feet washed by a precious, loving, and forgiving Master who said, "I love you anyway."

HE WASHED MY FEET

The moment our eyes met,
I knew this was the night
That I would betray Him, the precious
Lamb of God
No other disciple was aware
of my plan
'Til He rose from the table with
something in His hand
His Holy eyes pierced through me
Revealing all my sin
I knew His wrath was coming
And this would be the end

Chorus:
But He bowed, and He washed
my feet,
Knowing that I was the cause
of His grief.
When He should have scolded,
He whispered, "Peace"
As He bowed, and He washed
my feet.

Judas would fail Him, but He's
no worse than I
The moment I gave in to Satan's
compromise
Ungrateful that Jesus had saved me
from hell, I was walking so proudly
And that's when I fell
His Holy eyes pierced through me
Revealing all my sin
I knew His wrath was coming
And this would be the end

Words and Music by Rodney Griffin, © 1998
Songs of Greater Vision, BMI.

In My Father's house are many mansions;
if it were not so, I would have told you.
I go to prepare a place for you.
And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and receive you to Myself;
that where I am, there you may be also.
JOHN 14:2, 3

Writers, especially poets, learn to choose words that come with their own built-in emotional baggage. This is especially true when one wants to say a lot in as few words as possible. The right well-chosen few words can cover more territory than a whole carelessly constructed paragraph.

One of the words that carries such built-in DNA is the word *home*. There are other words listed in the thesaurus as synonyms: *house*, *dwelling*, *abode*, *residence*. See what I mean? *Home* says more.

Most of us have lived in several houses. We have had many addresses. We have built or bought different styles of dwellings and stayed there long enough for them to qualify as residences. But home—well, that's another story. If your heart says you need to go home, where would that be? What does that place look like in your mind?

Some of us would say it's the place we now live, the place we raised our babies and planted our gardens and

to put Lazarus to death also, [11]because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

The Triumphal Entry

[12]The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, [13]took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

"Hosanna!
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'[a]
The King of Israel!"

[14]Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

[15] *"Fear not, daughter of Zion;*
Behold, your King is coming,
Sitting on a donkey's colt."[a]

[16]His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

[17]Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. [18]For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. [19]The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"

The Fruitful Grain of Wheat

[20]Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. [21]Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

[22]Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

[23]But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. [24]Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but

12:13 [a]Psalm 118:26 **12:15** [a]Zechariah 9:9

if it dies, it produces much grain. [25]He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. [26]If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My* Father will honor.

Jesus Predicts His Death on the Cross

[27]"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. [28]Father, glorify Your name."

Then a voice came from heaven, *saying,* "I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again."

[29]Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."

[30]Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. [31]Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. [32]And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself." [33]This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

[34]The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how *can* You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

[35]Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. [36]While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Who Has Believed Our Report?

[37]But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, [38]that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

> *"Lord, who has believed our report?*
> *And to whom has the arm of the* LORD
> *been revealed?"*[a]

[39]Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

12:38 [a]Isaiah 53:1

decorated to suit the tastes and activities of our family. Others of us would name a place we haven't been in years: the homeplace where grandma lived or daddy built or the kids grew up.

For some, home means a part of the country that shaped our view of things or gave us our roots: the South, or the Plains, the Smokies, or Colorado. Some of us long for the lake country or the red dirt of Georgia, the coast or the wide open spaces of the old west.

Some long for a home they've never had. Abuse, estrangement, mobility, or divorce may have kept them from ever having a sense of place. On the outside looking in, they've ached in some deep place to identify with that tone in others' voices they hear when they say "home."

The good news is that whether or not we have had such a shaping place, we are being called by one nevertheless. One way or another we can all go home. That's what the gospel is all about. That is what this Jesus we follow came to do: to bring all the lost children of the Father home.

And when we get there, we'll know our hearts have been there all along. We'll hear the God of the universe—the perfect Father—say, "Welcome home!"



Loving God, Loving Each Other

They pushed back from the table
To listen to His words,
His secret plan before He had to go—
"It's not complicated;
Don't need a lot of rules,
This is all you'll need to know—

"It's loving God, loving each other,
Making music with my friends;
Loving God, loving each other
And the story never ends."

We tend to make it harder,
Build steeples out of stone,
Fill books with explanations of the way;
But if we'd stop and listen
And break a little bread
We would hear the Master say—

"It's loving God, loving each other,
Making music with my friends;
Loving God, loving each other
And the story never ends."

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

JOHN 13:34, 35

What did Jesus' friends expect? What did they think He was going to tell them that night that would prove to be His farewell Passover supper with them? Did they think He had some strategic plan to topple the Romans? Judas must have thought so—must have thought his plan to identify Jesus to authorities would force Jesus' hand, make Him get on with it and establish this new kingdom, maybe with Judas as the hero when Jesus finally realized how clever he had been.

And Peter and Andrew: did they think He was going to lay out His plan to ferret out the graft and deception in the Jewish hierarchy and clean up the Sanhedrin staff? What about the others—Bartholomew, Simon, James, Matthew, Thomas, Thaddaeus: did they have their minds braced for carrying out complicated instructions? *Whatever He says to us, we'll do it or die trying!* Did this thought go through their minds as they waited for His words?

Through Moses they had been given the Ten Commandments, and the Levitical priests had turned those laws into a complex system of rights and restrictions for carrying out God's demands. Surely Jesus also would leave them with instructions. In their hearts they knew they might fail Him. The law they already had was impossible to keep; had it not been for the sacrifices that covered their failures, they would never have been able to maintain the standard.

After the symbolic Seder supper, Jesus picked up a loaf of unleavened bread and broke it. "This is My body which is broken for you," He said, and began to pass the broken pieces to them. Then He took the cup—not the cup He'd been using throughout the meal, but more likely the cup every Jewish boy had been forbidden to touch, the cup that sat untouched in the center of every Passover table, the Messiah's cup, Elijah's cup.

They caught their breath when He picked it up. "This," He said, "is My blood that is shed for you." Then He made reference to the cup of joy, just as every Jewish father always did throughout the meal as the wine was sipped after each traditional question. But He wasn't asking them to *sip*. "Drink ye all of it," He commanded with a tone in His voice they couldn't quite identify. "Drink it that your joy may be full!"

Then He began talking about going away and how short was the time they had together, about how dear they were to Him, and how He had kept them together in the Father's name. He

told them His going away would be good for them, that He would send someone even better—"the Comforter," who would teach them all things.

"A new commandment I give to you." His tone had changed again.

Here it comes, they probably thought, *the hard part, the complicated part, beyond Moses and all the laws we already have to remember*.

They couldn't believe their ears at what He said next. It was almost a letdown, and yet it was more like a relief.

"Love each other."

That was it? That was the "new commandment"? They waited for more. But that was it. He said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now, you. Love each other like that."

Then He made it clear that He considered them equals, siblings of sorts. "I won't call you servants," He said, "because servants have no idea what the Master is doing. Instead, I have called you friends, because I have let you in on everything I've learned from My Father."

And then He said it again. "Love one another." Then He wanted them to sing together one last time. There He was—on His way to Gethsemane and on to Calvary—and He was making music with His friends.

They would never be able to forget this night as long as they lived. He had reduced all the laws and all the prophets' predictions and all of the religious expectations to three things: Love God. Love each other. Make music with all those who are My friends.

Then He walked to a cross and showed them how to love as the Father had loved. It wasn't until Sunday morning that they realized what He had meant about the joy and the cup. Mary came running to tell them. Love like that which He had commanded and then modeled had mysteriously infused everything with joy. "He's alive!" she was shouting as she banged on the locked gate. Her face shone like the sun and, like the sun that first day of a new week, He Himself had risen.

This new commandment may have been simple, but it was powerful! It had conquered death; it had made things new. It was making them new and willing to risk loving too. They would start by loving each other, just as He'd said. And the song He'd wanted to sing would be a story-song, a story that would never end. The joy, the song, the kingdom of God: it was all the same thing and it was—in them! Not on this hill, not on that hill, but in them! They would be the living stones, and He—they'd heard Him say it—He would be the cornerstone that the builders rejected, the stone hewn out of a mountain that would fill the whole earth.

Since that night in the Upper Room when Jesus gave His disciples the simple gospel of love, many have tried to add to it and amend it, organize it and section it off, make it exclusive and establish systems of requirements. But when an honest soul can get still before the living Christ, we can still hear Him say simply and clearly, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. . . . and love one another as I have loved you." Then as Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Sing, sing your hearts out to God!" (Col. 3:16 The Message). It doesn't get any better—or simpler—than that!

40 *"He has blinded their eyes and*
hardened their hearts,
Lest they should see with their eyes,
Lest they should understand with their
hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them."[a]

41 These things Isaiah said when[a] he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

Walk in the Light

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him,* lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. 46 I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. 47 And if anyone hears My words and does not believe,[a] I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on My own *authority;* but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

13 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

2 And supper being ended,[a] the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son,* to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, 4 rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. 6 Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

8 Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!"

10 Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

12 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. 14 If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Jesus Identifies His Betrayer

18 "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, *'He who eats bread with Me*[a] *has lifted up his heel against Me.'*[b] 19 Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He.* 20 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

21 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." 22 Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

12:40 [a]Isaiah 6:10 **12:41** [a]NU-Text reads *because.* **12:47** [a]NU-Text reads *keep them.* **13:2** [a]NU-Text reads *And during supper.* **13:18** [a]NU-Text reads *My bread.* [b]Psalm 41:9

[24]Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

[25]Then, leaning back[a] on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

[26]Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it*." And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. [27]Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." [28]But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. [29]For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

[30]Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

The New Commandment

[31]So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. [32]If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. [33]Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. [34]A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. [35]By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

[36]Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?"

Jesus answered him, "Where I am going

13:25 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *thus*.



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

If you love Me, keep My commandments. | JOHN 14:15

I recently reread the Book of Mark. On every page I saw a Savior who is motivated by compassion. Compassion not only says, "I love you," but also, "I will help you." The Lord so wanted the people of that day, as well as us today, to receive the commandments of God. Not because He wants to be the Great Commander (even though He is the Great Commander), but because He sees the big picture. He sees time from beginning to end, and He knows how sin affects our lives and the lives of those we love. He sees the heartache and pain that sin brings, and He wants to spare us that sorrow.

Jesus told a parable about a man who had a large estate. One day he decided to leave for a while and go to a far country. Before leaving, he called three servants to him; he gave the first servant five talents, the next two talents, and the third one talent. Then after placing the money under their management, he went on his journey.

He was gone for a long time, and when he returned he called for an accounting. The first servant said he had invested the five talents, and the money had doubled. The second said he also had doubled the two talents.

you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."

37 Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake."

38 Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.

The Way, the Truth, and the Life

14 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions;[a] if *it were* not *so,* I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.[b] 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."

5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

The Father Revealed

7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The

14:2 [a]Literally *dwellings* [b]NU-Text adds a word which would cause the text to read either *if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?* or *if it were not so I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.*

To each the master said, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord."

The third servant said, "Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours." The master said, "You wicked and lazy servant." He ordered the talent to be taken away and had the servant banished into outer darkness. He said, "You ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest" (Matt. 25:14–28).

I used to think that was a hard judgment. I've read the story again and again, and I see that the third servant did not really know his master. He misjudged him as a harsh, demanding man, and acted accordingly. Isn't that how some of us see God? We think He is waiting to zap us if we make a mistake. That is the same mistake the servant made, misjudging the master, whom he didn't really know or love.

We need to trust and know the Master and keep His commandments. God is loving. God is fair. God is just. Trusting Him to be all those things will make such a difference in the way we make our choices. Our understanding of God determines our plans and our daily walk (Mark 12:28–31).

words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority;* but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. [11]Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

The Answered Prayer

[12]"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. [13]And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [14]If you ask[a] anything in My name, I will do *it.*

Jesus Promises Another Helper

[15]"If you love Me, keep[a] My commandments. [16]And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— [17]the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. [18]I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Indwelling of the Father and the Son

[19]"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. [20]At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. [21]He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

[22]Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

[23]Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. [24]He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

The Gift of His Peace

[25]"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. [26]But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father

14:14 [a]NU-Text adds *Me.* **14:15** [a]NU-Text reads *you will keep.*



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. | JOHN 15:5

During a concert some time ago, I had the pleasure of visiting with a great friend whose husband refers to her as "The Lady." When "The Lady" sings, the anointing flows. She shared that she had been praying and seeking the Lord as to what she, personally, and their group might do to be as effective as possible for the cause of Christ. She was excited as she shared that God woke her during the night with the answer—"I was surprised at the answer because He only spoke three words: 'Abide in Me.'" The scripture she was directed to was John 15:4, which begins and ends with *abide*. I was immediately on the same spiritual wavelength.

When our family first started singing full time, I was a Christian and loved

will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. 27Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. 28You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming *back* to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said,[a] 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

29"And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. 30I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. 31But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

The True Vine

15 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;[a] and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5"I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 7If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will[a] ask what you desire, and it shall be done for

14:28 [a]NU-Text omits *I said.* **15:2** [a]Or *lifts up* **15:7** [a]NU-Text omits *you will.*

The Church knew what the psalmist knew: Music praises God. Music is well or better able to praise Him than the building of the church and all its decoration; it is the Church's greatest ornament.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

the Lord, but too often I'd become empty and defeated. Second to salvation, reading the Scriptures was revolutionary in my life. I remember praying and asking God to give me a hunger for His Word, and He did. I remember the time distinctly when John 15:5 was embedded in my heart. I didn't understand everything about the vine and the branches, but I knew it said, "Without Me you can do nothing," and "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit." This was a great source of strength to me. I had never heard anyone teach from John 15 until a Bible cruise several years ago when a well-known and anointed minister expounded on it so powerfully. He related, and I quote, "Jesus made a clear delineation between the vine and the branch. The two are joined but not one. The common denominator in nature is the sap. The sap is the life of the vine and its branches. Cut off the flow of sap to the branch and it slowly withers and dies. As the branch draws its life from the vine so we draw life from Christ. To abide in Christ is to draw upon His life. His life is made available through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If you are trying to live the Christian life in your own strength, Jesus said that it is impossible." Apart from Him, we can do nothing. Thanks, friend, for sharing the words of Christ, "Abide in Me."

you. 8By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Love and Joy Perfected

9"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

11"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. 12This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17These things I command you, that you love one another.

The World's Hatred

18"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. 19If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. 22If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23He who hates Me hates My Father also. 24If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. 25But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, *'They hated Me without a cause.'*[a]

15:25 [a]Psalm 69:4

No longer do I call you servants,
for a servant does not know
what his master is doing;
but I have called you friends.
JOHN 15:15

God is not playing games with us. He wants us to know Him and His will for our days. But using human reason and human knowledge will not unravel the mysteries of God. They are discerned by the Spirit. God chooses us and causes us to long for Him. That longing is the first step in a sensitivity to the things of the Spirit, a budding sensitivity that will drive us more and more into the arms of Jesus until we begin to realize that a real relationship is developing and, as in all deepening relationships, there grows a natural knowing what the other person is all about. The more we are together, the more we think alike and begin to sense the will and wants of the One whom we have come to know and love.



Do You Know I Love You?

GLORIA GAITHER

Oh daughter, did you know how much
I loved you?
Through all the voices did you hear
me say
That you are my great heart's
dearly beloved?
When every road was gone, I was
the Way.
Through all the fires of hell I came to
find you.
Pursued you down the corridors
of time—
Though satan sold you cheap and
stole your virtue
I bought you with my life and you
are mine.

I love you with a love that has no limit;
You're flesh of my flesh, bone of
my bone.
I love you with a love that has
no limit—
I will not rest a moment till
you're home.

Oh, son, in your rebellion did you
hear me?
Hear my love song ringing in the night?
When acid tears of guilt burned hot to
blind you,
I was the soothing balm that gave
you sight
When fast and far you ran
pursuing pleasure,
I was the hound of heaven faster still—
I could not let you go because I
loved you,
Loved you all that time and love
you still.

I love you with a love that has
no limit;
You're flesh of my flesh, bone of
my bone.
I love you with a love that has
no limit—
I will not rest a moment till
you're home.

The Coming Rejection

[26]"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. [27]And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

16 "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. [2]They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. [3]And these things they will do to you[a] because they have not known the Father nor Me. [4]But these things I have told you, that when the[a] time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

"And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

[5]"But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' [6]But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [7]Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. [8]And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: [9]of sin, because they do not believe in Me; [10]of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; [11]of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

[12]"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. [13]However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority,* but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. [14]He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. [15]All things that the Father has are

16:3 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to you.* **16:4** [a]NU-Text reads *their.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. | JOHN 16:23

The expression "in that day" in the context of John 16:13–17 describes the wonderful day when the Holy Spirit comes to indwell His children. In the day of His indwelling, in the day of His fullness, in that day "you will ask me nothing." The idea of not asking the Lord Jesus any more questions suggests that "in that day" we will have a satisfied mind. I once heard Dr. Alan Fleece, the former president of Columbia Bible College, illustrate this truth. He described a blind man being led up a mountain by a guide. The blind man was full of questions. "Do you see any animals? Are there many travelers on the trail? What is the view? Can you see other mountains? Are there clouds in the sky?" On and on the questions came because he could not see. Then Dr. Fleece said, "Suppose he was suddenly and miraculously given sight. Do you think the questions would keep coming or would he be standing in silent awe, drinking in the wonderful sights?" When God opens our eyes, our questions dissipate because with the revelation comes a satisfied mind.

Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.[a]

Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

16 "A little while, and you will not see Me;
and again a little while, and you will see
Me, because I go to the Father."
17 Then *some* of His disciples said among
themselves, "What is this that He says to
us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me;
and again a little while, and you will see
Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?"
18 They said therefore, "What is this that He
says, 'A little while'? We do not know what
He is saying."
19 Now Jesus knew that they desired to
ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you
inquiring among yourselves about what
I said, 'A little while, and you will not see
Me; and again a little while, and you will
see Me'? 20 Most assuredly, I say to you that
you will weep and lament, but the world
will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but
your sorrow will be turned into joy. 21 A
woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow
because her hour has come; but as soon as
she has given birth to the child, she no lon-
ger remembers the anguish, for joy that a
human being has been born into the world.
22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will
see you again and your heart will rejoice,
and your joy no one will take from you.
23 "And in that day you will ask Me noth-
ing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever
you ask the Father in My name He will give
you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing
in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that
your joy may be full.

Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World

25 "These things I have spoken to you in
figurative language; but the time is coming
when I will no longer speak to you in figu-
rative language, but I will tell you plainly
about the Father. 26 In that day you will ask
in My name, and I do not say to you that
I shall pray the Father for you; 27 for the
Father Himself loves you, because you have
loved Me, and have believed that I came
forth from God. 28 I came forth from the
Father and have come into the world. Again,
I leave the world and go to the Father."
29 His disciples said to Him, "See, now
You are speaking plainly, and using no fig-
ure of speech! 30 Now we are sure that You
know all things, and have no need that
anyone should question You. By this we
believe that You came forth from God."
31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now
believe? 32 Indeed the hour is coming, yes,
has now come, that you will be scattered,
each to his own, and will leave Me alone.
And yet I am not alone, because the Father
is with Me. 33 These things I have spoken
to you, that in Me you may have peace. In
the world you will[a] have tribulation; but be
of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Jesus Prays for Himself

17 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up
His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father,
the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that
Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You
have given Him authority over all flesh,
that He should[a] give eternal life to as many
as You have given Him. 3 And this is eter-
nal life, that they may know You, the only
true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have
sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth.
I have finished the work which You have
given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify
Me together with Yourself, with the glory
which I had with You before the world was.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

6 "I have manifested Your name to the men

16:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *He takes of Mine and will declare it to you.* **16:33** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *will.* **17:2** [a]M-Text reads *shall.*



They are not of the world,
just as I am not of the world.
JOHN 17:16

If we think our families are complicated, consider the household of faith—God's family! Family is the sweetest, safest place for us to abide and to grow, to be nurtured and protected. But it is also the place where every flaw is exposed, every pressure button pushed, every virtue tried to the limit.

But our God—our priest—is up to the task, fit for the job. He is holy to make us blameless. He is harmless to make us unthreatening. He is undefiled (not sordid or soiled in heart) so that we can stay pure when everything around us is sordid. He is an island of goodness in a sea of wickedness so that we can be good and honest in a crooked and perverse generation. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). The world doesn't need to define our behavior. When God is within us, we define behavior—even for ourselves.

whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them,* and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

9"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me,[a] that they may be one as We *are.* 12While I was with them in the world,[a] I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept;[b] and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

20"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will[a] believe in Me through their word; 21that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

17:11 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *keep them through Your name which You have given Me.* **17:12** [a]NU-Text omits *in the world.* [b]NU-Text reads *in Your name which You gave Me. And I guarded them;* (or *it;*). **17:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *will.*

[24]"Father, I desire that they also whom
You gave Me may be with Me where I am,
that they may behold My glory which You
have given Me; for You loved Me before
the foundation of the world. [25]O righteous
Father! The world has not known You, but
I have known You; and these have known
that You sent Me. [26]And I have declared to
them Your name, and will declare *it,* that
the love with which You loved Me may be
in them, and I in them."

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

18 When Jesus had spoken these words,
He went out with His disciples over
the Brook Kidron, where there was a gar-
den, which He and His disciples entered.
[2]And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew
the place; for Jesus often met there with
His disciples. [3]Then Judas, having received
a detachment *of troops,* and officers from
the chief priests and Pharisees, came there
with lanterns, torches, and weapons. [4]Jesus
therefore, knowing all things that would
come upon Him, went forward and said to
them, "Whom are you seeking?"

[5]They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus said to them, "I am *He.*" And Judas,
who betrayed Him, also stood with them.
[6]Now when He said to them, "I am *He,*" they
drew back and fell to the ground.

[7]Then He asked them again, "Whom are
you seeking?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

[8]Jesus answered, "I have told you that I
am *He.* Therefore, if you seek Me, let these
go their way," [9]that the saying might be
fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom
You gave Me I have lost none."

[10]Then Simon Peter, having a sword,
drew it and struck the high priest's ser-
vant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's
name was Malchus.

[11]So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword
into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup
which My Father has given Me?"

Before the High Priest

[12]Then the detachment *of troops* and
the captain and the officers of the Jews
arrested Jesus and bound Him. [13]And they
led Him away to Annas first, for he was the
father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high
priest that year. [14]Now it was Caiaphas who
advised the Jews that it was expedient that
one man should die for the people.

Peter Denies Jesus

[15]And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and
so *did* another[a] disciple. Now that disciple
was known to the high priest, and went with
Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.
[16]But Peter stood at the door outside. Then
the other disciple, who was known to the
high priest, went out and spoke to her
who kept the door, and brought Peter in.
[17]Then the servant girl who kept the door
said to Peter, "You are not also *one* of this
Man's disciples, are you?"

He said, "I am not."

[18]Now the servants and officers who had
made a fire of coals stood there, for it was
cold, and they warmed themselves. And
Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

Jesus Questioned by the High Priest

[19]The high priest then asked Jesus
about His disciples and His doctrine.

[20]Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly
to the world. I always taught in synagogues
and in the temple, where the Jews always
meet,[a] and in secret I have said nothing.
[21]Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have
heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they
know what I said."

[22]And when He had said these things,
one of the officers who stood by struck
Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying,
"Do You answer the high priest like that?"

[23]Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken
evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well,
why do you strike Me?"

[24]Then Annas sent Him bound to Caia-
phas the high priest.

Peter Denies Twice More

[25]Now Simon Peter stood and warmed
himself. Therefore they said to him, "You
are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?"

He denied *it* and said, "I am not!"

[26]One of the servants of the high priest,
a relative *of him* whose ear Peter cut off,
said, "Did I not see you in the garden with
Him?" [27]Peter then denied again; and
immediately a rooster crowed.

18:15 [a]M-Text reads *the other.* **18:20** [a]NU-Text reads *where all the Jews meet.*

Gospel Songs

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!"

JOHN 20:15,16

ONE BENEFIT of God's being everywhere is that we can develop sanctuaries of worship to Him in the most diverse locales. The car, coffee shops, open fields, bedroom closets—people have been known to spend time with the Lord in all sorts of venues. C. Austin Miles, an amateur photographer, took to seeking out the Lord in his darkroom. Miles was a former pharmacist, but he seemed to love the arts, serving as an editor for a songbook publisher, writing songs himself, and dabbling in photography. He used his solitary time in his converted basement darkroom to cultivate an intimate friendship with Jesus, and one day, as he was reading in John 20 about another such friend of the Lord, he had a vision:

As the light faded, I seemed to be standing at the entrance of a garden, looking down a gently winding path, shaded by olive branches. A woman in white, with head bowed, hand clasping her throat as if to choke back her sobs, walked slowly into the shadows. It was Mary. As she came to the tomb, upon which she placed her hand, she bent over to look in and hurried away. John, in flowing robe, appeared, looking at the tomb; then came Peter, who entered the tomb, followed slowly by John. As they departed, Mary reappeared; leaning her head upon her arm at the tomb, she wept. Turning herself, she saw Jesus standing, so did I. I knew it was He. She knelt before Him, with arms outstretched and looking into His face cried "Rabboni!"

Being the writer that he was, Miles recorded his experience in the form of a poem, and that evening, he composed the music for "In the Garden."

The sustaining popularity of Miles' song is a testament not only to his musical talents, but even more so to the blessing of a life spent walking with God. It would seem that Miles experienced the closeness with Jesus that he imagined Mary Magdalene having: "He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own." To be counted as one like Abraham, whom God called His friend (Is. 41:8), like Moses, who spoke with the Lord as a man speaks to his friend (Ex. 33:11), like the apostles, whom Jesus called His friends (John 15:15, 16), can there be any greater honor? Can there be any greater joy?

In the Garden

C. Austin Miles, 1912

I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.

Refrain:
And He walks with me
And He talks with me,
And He tells me that I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

He speaks, and the sound of His voice is so sweet,
The birds hush their singing
And the melody that He gave to me,
Within my heart is ringing.

Refrain

I'd stay in the garden with Him,
Though the night around me be falling,
But He bids me go; through the voice of woe,
His voice to me is calling.

Refrain

Where God is at the center of things, worship inevitably follows. Where there is no spirit of worship, there God has been dethroned and displaced.

SINCLAIR FERGUSON

In Pilate's Court

28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to
the Praetorium, and it was early morning.
But they themselves did not go into the
Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but
that they might eat the Passover. 29 Pilate
then went out to them and said, "What
accusation do you bring against this Man?"
30 They answered and said to him, "If He
were not an evildoer, we would not have
delivered Him up to you."
31 Then Pilate said to them, "You take
Him and judge Him according to your law."
Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is
not lawful for us to put anyone to death,"
32 that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled
which He spoke, signifying by what death
He would die.
33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium
again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are
You the King of the Jews?"
34 Jesus answered him, "Are you speak-
ing for yourself about this, or did others
tell you this concerning Me?"
35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own
nation and the chief priests have delivered
You to me. What have You done?"
36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not
of this world. If My kingdom were of this
world, My servants would fight, so that I
should not be delivered to the Jews; but
now My kingdom is not from here."
37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You
a king then?"
Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I
am a king. For this cause I was born, and for
this cause I have come into the world, that I
should bear witness to the truth. Everyone
who is of the truth hears My voice."



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." | JOHN 20:22

This is the second time we read about God breathing on men. The first time was when the Lord breathed into Adam's nostrils and his clay form came to life. That was the first creation. This is now a new creation, and the Lord is breathing on His disciples, giving them a foretaste of Pentecost. I picture Adam as a clay man lying helplessly on the earth before he received the breath of God. He was totally helpless. He had eyes but he could not see; he had ears, but he could not hear; he had limbs, but he could not move. There could not be a greater picture of a helpless man than Adam before the breath of God. Just as helpless are the disciples before Pentecost. Although they looked very much alive, they were as desperately in need of the breath of God as Adam was. We must not think that we can operate out of the old creation; how we need the breath of God!

38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"
And when he had said this, he went out
again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find
no fault in Him at all.

Taking the Place of Barabbas

39 "But you have a custom that I should
release someone to you at the Passover. Do
you therefore want me to release to you
the King of the Jews?"
40 Then they all cried again, saying, "Not
this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was
a robber.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

19 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged
Him. 2 And the soldiers twisted a crown
of thorns and put *it* on His head, and they
put on Him a purple robe. 3 Then they said,[a]
"Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him
with their hands.
4 Pilate then went out again, and said to
them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to
you, that you may know that I find no fault
in Him."

Pilate's Decision

5 Then Jesus came out, wearing the
crown of thorns and the purple robe. And
Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!"
6 Therefore, when the chief priests and
officers saw Him, they cried out, saying,
"Crucify *Him,* crucify *Him!*"
Pilate said to them, "You take Him and
crucify *Him,* for I find no fault in Him."
7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law,
and according to our[a] law He ought to die,
because He made Himself the Son of God."
8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that say-
ing, he was the more afraid, 9 and went
again into the Praetorium, and said to
Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus
gave him no answer.
10 Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not
speaking to me? Do You not know that I
have power to crucify You, and power to
release You?"
11 Jesus answered, "You could have no
power at all against Me unless it had been
given you from above. Therefore the one
who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."
12 From then on Pilate sought to release
Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If
you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's
friend. Whoever makes himself a king
speaks against Caesar."
13 When Pilate therefore heard that say-
ing, he brought Jesus out and sat down in
the judgment seat in a place that is called
The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.
14 Now it was the Preparation Day of the
Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he
said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"
15 But they cried out, "Away with *Him,*
away with *Him!* Crucify Him!"
Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your
King?"
The chief priests answered, "We have
no king but Caesar!"
16 Then he delivered Him to them to be
crucified. Then they took Jesus and led
Him away.[a]

The King on a Cross

17 And He, bearing His cross, went out
to a place called *the Place* of a Skull, which
is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, 18 where they
crucified Him, and two others with Him,
one on either side, and Jesus in the center.
19 Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the
cross. And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF
THE JEWS.

20 Then many of the Jews read this title, for
the place where Jesus was crucified was
near the city; and it was written in Hebrew,
Greek, *and* Latin.
21 Therefore the chief priests of the Jews
said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of
the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of
the Jews." '"
22 Pilate answered, "What I have written,
I have written."
23 Then the soldiers, when they had cru-
cified Jesus, took His garments and made
four parts, to each soldier a part, and also
the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam,
woven from the top in one piece. 24 They
said therefore among themselves, "Let us
not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it
shall be," that the Scripture might be ful-
filled which says:

19:3 [a]NU-Text reads *And they came up to Him and said.* **19:7** [a]NU-Text reads *the law.* **19:16** [a]NU-Text omits *and led Him away.*

The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."
JOHN 20:25

There is a line in one of my otherwise favorite hymns, "Leave It There," that I am not able to honestly sing exactly as the hymn writer wrote it. It goes, "If you trust and never doubt, He will surely bring you out." Thankfully (and mercifully), I have been rescued by another line. This one was spoken by our Lord Himself, and it was spoken to the most famous doubter in the New Testament, whose very name has come to be a synonym for doubters—Thomas. This line turned out to be the last beatitude, and it was not spoken in the Sermon on the Mount, but to Thomas himself where the disciples had barricaded themselves after the Crucifixion.

Jesus had appeared alive to several of the men and women disciples, but Thomas wasn't buying their story and had said so in no uncertain terms! "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it."

Then in spite of the locked doors, Jesus showed up. Not only Thomas but also the others were there as well. But after greeting them with "Peace to you!" Jesus turned His focus to Thomas. Thomas must have hoped that what he had said hadn't gotten back to Jesus. He probably expected condemnation. But Jesus instead held out His hands to Thomas, reaching all the way to the core

"They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots."[a]

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

Behold Your Mother

[25]Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. [26]When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" [27]Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.

It Is Finished

[28]After this, Jesus, knowing[a] that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" [29]Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. [30]So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Jesus' Side Is Pierced

[31]Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day,* that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. [32]Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. [33]But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. [34]But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. [35]And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. [36]For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, *"Not one of His bones shall be broken."*[a] [37]And again another Scripture says, *"They shall look on Him whom they pierced."*[a]

19:24 [a]Psalm 22:18 **19:28** [a]M-Text reads *seeing*. **19:36** [a]Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20 **19:37** [a]Zechariah 12:10

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

[38]After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. [39]And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. [40]Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. [41]Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. [42]So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation *Day,* for the tomb was nearby.

The Empty Tomb

20 Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. [2]Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

[3]Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. [4]So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. [5]And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there;* yet he did not go in. [6]Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there,* [7]and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. [8]Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. [9]For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. [10]Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

[11]But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb. [12]And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body

of Thomas's doubts: "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands," He said. "Reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (vv. 26, 27).

Thomas did believe. "My Lord and my God!" he said as he embraced the evidence with his heart. But that wasn't the end of this episode. Jesus then threw a lifeline to me and to all of us who can't stop our minds from asking questions. "Because you have seen Me, you have believed," Jesus said to Thomas and the others in the room. (Now comes the last beatitude.) "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (v. 29).

Those outstretched hands tell me that whatever it takes, Jesus will lead us to the place where we can honestly trade in our questions and doubts for faith—even if we never see until He comes again and we can trade all doubt for certainty.

Meanwhile, we are not condemned for our questions; neither is God intimidated by them. He created the minds with which we are questioning, and I'm convinced we can't come up with any questions He hasn't heard before.

I have a feeling that those who never have big questions may not have very deep faith, and sometimes the bigger the price we pay for our faith, the stronger that faith is to withstand the hard times that inevitably will come to test our faith into the next rung of spiritual maturity.

I still love the old hymn, but I sing the more honest words these days: "If I trust Him through my doubts, He will surely bring me out." Now I'm working on the next phrase: "Take your burdens to the Lord," (I can do that) "and leave them there." (Now, that is not so easy!)

I've Just Seen Jesus

We knew He was dead.
"It is finished," He'd said;
We had watched as His life
ebbed away.
Then we all stood around
'Til guards took Him down—
Joseph begged for His body
that day.
It was late afternoon
When we got to the tomb,
Wrapped His body in and sealed
up the grave.
So I know how you feel—
His death was so real—
But please listen and hear what I say:

I've just seen Jesus! I tell you
He's alive!
I've just seen Jesus! My precious
Lord . . . alive!
And I knew, He really saw me
too!—as if 'til now, I'd never
lived!
All that I've done before won't
matter anymore—
I've just seen Jesus! I've just seen
Jesus!
I will never be the same again.

It was just before dawn—
I was running along
Barely able to see where to go—
For the tears in my eyes
And the dusky sunrise
Seemed to cloud up my vision so.
It was His voice I first heard—
Those kind gentle words
Asking what was my reason for tears.
And I sobbed in despair,
"My Lord is not there!"
He said, "Child! It is I. I am here!"

I've just seen Jesus! I tell you
He's alive!
I've just seen Jesus! My
precious Lord . . . alive!
And I knew, He really saw me
too!—as if 'til now, I'd
never lived!
All that I've done before won't
matter anymore—
I've just seen Jesus! I've just
seen Jesus!
I will never be the same again.

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

JOHN 20:18

Many epic films have been made of biblical stories and the life of Christ: *The Ten Commandments, Ben Hur, The Passion of the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth*, and *Quo Vadis*, to name a few. Hollywood effects have made the Red Sea part and the waves form a giant wall of water for the cast of thousands to march to freedom from Pharaoh's army. Technology has caused a river to turn to blood and leprosy to disappear.

But for me no film device has been as powerful as that used in the old black and white Cecil B. DeMille film *King of Kings*. Instead of casting an actor to portray Christ, the director chose to show only Jesus' feet walking along the way. The cameras focused not on Jesus but on the faces of those who were affected by Him. Made before the days of "talking films," the movie forced its audience to read on the screen what Jesus said, then see the result of His words in the lives changed or the bodies healed.

But movie depictions would pale in the reality of walking with the living Christ. Of all the encounters with the living, walking Christ of history, none would have been as amazing as those the disciples who loved Him best experienced the third day after the Crucifixion. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, Martha and Mary of Bethany, John, Thomas . . . on Friday they had stood at the foot of the Cross. Every unbearable moment of that afternoon had been etched in their memories: the nails, the thud of the Cross as it dropped into the hole the executioners had dug for it, the seven times Jesus had groaned out His last words.

They had waited around—through the storm, through the eerie blackness of midday until evening when the soldiers came to confirm

that the bodies were lifeless. It hadn't been hard to take Jesus' body down from the Cross; the nails—from the rough treatment and the weight of His body—had torn large holes through His hands.

Joseph of Arimathea spoke to the soldiers and asked for permission to take Jesus' body for burial in an unused grave on his property. By the time the body had been released and they'd carried it to the tomb, they had little time left before sundown, the beginning of Sabbath, to wash and wrap the body. There was no doubt that Jesus was dead. The gaping wounds, especially from the spear the soldiers had jabbed in His side, had released so much blood and body fluids that He looked shrunken and dehydrated.

How tenderly they must have washed His body, His words still echoing through their minds: "Take, eat; this is My body that is broken for you." The night before they had thought that the bread and the wine and His words were only symbols as ancient as Moses. Now they realized this was a new thing—this breaking of bread He had asked them to "do in remembrance" of Him. For His part, it was no symbol. His real body here in their hands was torn to pieces. For them too it would become more than a symbol; it would become a call to follow His example, even if it meant losing their lives.

That Sabbath eve they had gone their separate ways in silence. There was nothing to say. It seemed to be all over. They had walked an amazing journey with Him toward a promised kingdom that now seemed to lie shattered at their feet. Yet something unexplainable in their bones felt not like an end but a beginning. Perhaps they were in denial, yet there was a sense of hope in all the black hopelessness that no one could articulate—not to each other, not to themselves.

Then, on that Easter morning, they found the tomb empty. Mary Magdelene had actually spoken to the living Christ, and they—Peter and John—ran to check out her story. Could it be true? They felt the gamut of emotions as they entered the garden of the tomb. They could see at once the open grave, the stone leaning to one side as if it had been shoved like a child's toy out of someone's way. And then they saw the figure clothed in white, sitting on the grave slab at the foot of where they had laid their Lord's body.

"Why do you look for life in the place of the dead? He is not here! He is risen! Look, this is where you laid Him!"

Their faces—what was on their faces? And how did they return to the other disciples? Whatever happened to them there and later when He appeared to them, charged them with a passion that still, two thousand years later, makes us believe their story.



of Jesus had lain. 13Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

14Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there,* and did not know that it was Jesus. 15Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

16Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned and said to Him,[a] "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

17Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and *to* My God and your God.'"

18Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord,[a] and *that* He had spoken these things to her.

The Apostles Commissioned

19Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled,[a] for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." 20When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22And when He had said this, He breathed on *them,* and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained."

Seeing and Believing

24Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here,* and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29Jesus said to him, "Thomas,[a] because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed."

That You May Believe

30And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Breakfast by the Sea

21 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself:* 2Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately[a] got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. 4But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?"

They answered Him, "No."

6And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some.*" So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

7Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the

---

20:16 [a]NU-Text adds *in Hebrew.* **20:18** [a]NU-Text reads *disciples, "I have seen the Lord," . . .* **20:19** [a]NU-Text omits *assembled.* **20:29** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Thomas.* **21:3** [a]NU-Text omits *immediately.*

Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. [8]But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. [9]Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. [10]Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

[11]Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. [12]Jesus said to them, "Come *and* eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord. [13]Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

[14]This *is* now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Jesus Restores Peter

[15]So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah,[a] do you love Me more than these?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

[16]He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah,[a] do you love Me?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

[17]He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah,[a] do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"

And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. [18]Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish." [19]This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

The Beloved Disciple and His Book

[20]Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" [21]Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what *about* this man?"

[22]Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me."

[23]Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?"

[24]This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

[25]And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

21:15 [a]NU-Text reads *John*. **21:16** [a]NU-Text reads *John*.
21:17 [a]NU-Text reads *John*.

THE
Acts
OF THE APOSTLES



Prologue

1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do
and teach, 2until the day in which He was
taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit
had given commandments to the apostles
whom He had chosen, 3to whom He also
presented Himself alive after His suffering
by many infallible proofs, being seen by
them during forty days and speaking of the
things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit Promised

4And being assembled together with
them, He commanded them not to depart
from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise
of the Father, "which," *He said,* "you have
heard from Me; 5for John truly baptized
with water, but you shall be baptized with
the Holy Spirit not many days from now."
6Therefore, when they had come together,
they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at
this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
7And He said to them, "It is not for you to
know times or seasons which the Father
has put in His own authority. 8But you
shall receive power when the Holy Spirit
has come upon you; and you shall be wit-
nesses to Me[a] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea
and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Jesus Ascends to Heaven

9Now when He had spoken these things,
while they watched, He was taken up, and
a cloud received Him out of their sight.
10And while they looked steadfastly toward
heaven as He went up, behold, two men
stood by them in white apparel, 11who also
said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand
gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus,
who was taken up from you into heaven,
will so come in like manner as you saw Him
go into heaven."

The Upper Room Prayer Meeting

12Then they returned to Jerusalem from
the mount called Olivet, which is near
Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. 13And
when they had entered, they went up into
the upper room where they were staying:
Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and
Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James
the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot;
and Judas *the son* of James. 14These all
continued with one accord in prayer and
supplication,[a] with the women and Mary
the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Matthias Chosen

15And in those days Peter stood up in
the midst of the disciples[a] (altogether the
number of names was about a hundred
and twenty), and said, 16"Men *and* brethren,
this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which
the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth
of David concerning Judas, who became a
guide to those who arrested Jesus; 17for he
was numbered with us and obtained a part
in this ministry."

18(Now this man purchased a field with
the wages of iniquity; and falling head-
long, he burst open in the middle and all
his entrails gushed out. 19And it became
known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem;
so that field is called in their own lan-
guage, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20"For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

'Let his dwelling place be desolate,
And let no one live in it';[a]

and,

'Let[b] *another take his office.*'[c]

1:8 [a]NU-Text reads *My witnesses.* **1:14** [a]NU-Text omits *and supplication.*
1:15 [a]NU-Text reads *brethren.* **1:20** [a]Psalm 69:25 [b]Psalm 109:8
[c]Greek *episkopen,* position of overseer

Poets

GLORIA GAITHER

The world is hurting from a shortage
of lovers
people who feel what others feel;
people of compassion.
There is too much pain and too
little joy
too many wounds and not
enough balm
too much alienation and not
enough belonging
too much loneliness and not
enough faithfulness
too many tears in the night and
not enough arms to enfold.
The world is hurting from a shortage
of lovers.

The world is oblivious for there are
too few visionaries;
too blind to subtleties and too
impressed by carnivals
too numb to gentleness and too
overwhelmed by power
too dull to recognize the
permanent and too
focused to the transient
too tuned out to the prophets
and too attuned to the
hucksters.
The world is oblivious for there are
too few visionaries.

The world is losing heart for there
are too few dreamers;
too much cynicism and not
enough faith
too much hype and not
enough hope
too much savvy and not
enough wisdom
too much money and not
enough treasure
too much form and not
enough substance
too many takers and not
enough givers
too many dissenters and not
enough inspirers.
The world is losing heart for there
are too few dreamers.

Into such a world God sends His
poets, prophets and troubadours
who see what we have missed
who warn us lest we self-destruct
and who fill the songless
night with music.

They surround our alienation with
love's embrace.
They burn through the fog of our
oblivion
with the piercing light of truth.
And they sing the dream back
into our hearts.

They tune our ears to the laughter
of children.
They raise our sights to lofty
aspirations.
They help us discriminate
between the tinsel and
the true.

Poets are the contemplatives in the
heart of the world.
Without them we would settle
into the fatal monotony of our
comfort zones
and accept the clouded vision
of cataracted perception.

They see—and help us see—
what we might have missed.

They remind the breaking heart
that there is the promise of the
new dawn.

They point out to us battle-weary
soldiers
that we are almost home.

When we are tempted to put too
much store
in what we have
or what we know
they remind us that we have
really known nothing.

When we focus on our failures
they point us to the Potter
who doesn't patch up a broken
vessel
but puts it back on the wheel
and remolds it
into something brand
new.

When we struggle for some sense
of worth
when we feel insignificant they speak
to us of a God who cares
about robins that fall
lilies of the field
wind-ravaged trees
and frightened sailors
in a storm
and assures us
that He will speak peace
to the storms in us
because He loves us infinitely
more.

We need—this world needs
what they are to us:
lovers
visionaries
dreamers
poets
We need them here to walk with us
and sing their pilgrim's song.

21 "Therefore, of these men who have
accompanied us all the time that the Lord
Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day
when He was taken up from us, one of
these must become a witness with us of His
resurrection."

23 And they proposed two: Joseph called
Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and
Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, "You,
O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show
which of these two You have chosen 25 to take
part in this ministry and apostleship from
which Judas by transgression fell, that he
might go to his own place." 26 And they cast
their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And
he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

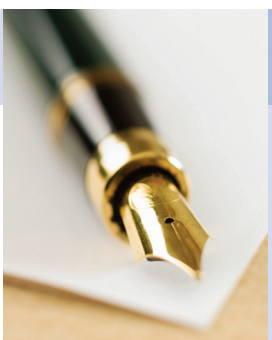
Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the Day of Pentecost had fully
come, they were all with one accord[a] in
one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound
from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and
it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided
tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of
them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy
Spirit and began to speak with other tongues,
as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The Crowd's Response

5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem
Jews, devout men, from every nation under
heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the
multitude came together, and were confused,
because everyone heard them speak in his
own language. 7 Then they were all amazed
and marveled, saying to one another, "Look,
are not all these who speak Galileans? 8 And
how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? 9 Parthians and
Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and

2:1 [a]NU-Text reads *together.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." . . . So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?" | ACTS 3:4, 12

Peter told the crippled man at the gate Beautiful to turn his eyes and look on him. Was this just to get his attention? Was he telling the lame man to focus on him so that he would not get sidetracked from the message? I ask the question because of the comment Peter made to those who were superstitious and thinking Peter and John had some kind of miracle powers. "Why are you looking at us?" he asked. "Do you think this man found strength in his legs because of us?" Isn't it strange? "Look at us! Why are you looking at us?" I believe Peter was really saying, "Look at Christ in us! Do not look at us as men. We do not have anything. What we have, we offer. We have Jesus. Look at us!" When they looked at them without seeing Jesus, Peter checked them and said, "Why are you looking at us as if we, in ourselves, had some power to heal?" When we invite people to look at us it is so that they can see Jesus.

Asia, [10]Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, [11]Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." [12]So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

[13]Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

Peter's Sermon

[14]But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. [15]For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day. [16]But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

[17] *'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,*
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.
[18] *And on My menservants and on My maidservants*
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
And they shall prophesy.
[19] *I will show wonders in heaven above*
And signs in the earth beneath:
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
[20] *The sun shall be turned into darkness,*
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.
[21] *And it shall come to pass*
That whoever calls on the name of the LORD
Shall be saved.'[a]

[22]"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— [23]Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken[a] by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; [24]whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. [25]For David says concerning Him:

'I foresaw the LORD *always before my face,*
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.
[26] *Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;*
Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.
[27] *For You will not leave my soul in Hades,*
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
[28] *You have made known to me the ways of life;*
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'[a]

[29]"Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. [30]Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,[a] [31]he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. [32]This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. [33]Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

[34]"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

'The LORD *said to my Lord,*
"Sit at My right hand,
[35] *Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."'*[a]

[36]"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

[37]Now when they heard *this,* they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"

2:21 [a]Joel 2:28–32 **2:23** [a]NU-Text omits *have taken.* **2:28** [a]Psalm 16:8–11 **2:30** [a]NU-Text omits *according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ* and completes the verse with *He would seat one on his throne.* **2:35** [a]Psalm 110:1

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and
let every one of you be baptized in the
name of Jesus Christ for the remission of
sins; and you shall receive the gift of the
Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and
to your children, and to all who are afar
off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

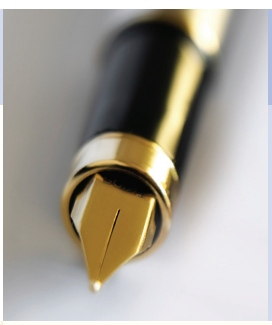
A Vital Church Grows

40 And with many other words he testi-
fied and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved
from this perverse generation." 41 Then those
who gladly[a] received his word were baptized;
and that day about three thousand souls
were added *to them.* 42 And they continued
steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fel-
lowship, in the breaking of bread, and in
prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul,
and many wonders and signs were done
through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed
were together, and had all things in common,
45 and sold their possessions and goods, and
divided them among all, as anyone had need.
46 So continuing daily with one accord
in the temple, and breaking bread from
house to house, they ate their food with
gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising
God and having favor with all the people.
And the Lord added to the church[a] daily
those who were being saved.

A Lame Man Healed

3 Now Peter and John went up together
to the temple at the hour of prayer, the
ninth *hour.* 2 And a certain man lame from
his mother's womb was carried, whom they
laid daily at the gate of the temple which is
called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who
entered the temple; 3 who, seeing Peter and
John about to go into the temple, asked for
alms. 4 And fixing his eyes on him, with John,
Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So he gave them his
attention, expecting to receive something
from them. 6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold
I do not have, but what I do have I give you:
In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise
up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right

2:41 [a]NU-Text omits *gladly.* **2:47** [a]NU-Text omits *to the church.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

By stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus. | ACTS 4:30

Peter reached out and took the lame man by the right hand. It was Peter's hand that was stretched out to help the helpless. Later, when they prayed to the Lord about the events of the day, they asked the Lord to continually stretch forth His hand to heal. Whose hand was it? Was it the hand of Peter or was it the hand of Jesus? I have heard some Christians say that we are an extension of the hand of Christ. I think it is the other way around. I think the hand of Christ is an extension of our hand. It was the hand of Christ, not Peter that lifted that man from his condition to be able to leap and praise God. It is our union with the indwelling Christ that enables Christ to touch others through us. As I stretch forth my hand to help fallen humanity, I must pray that God would continually stretch forth His hand to heal.

hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. 9And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Preaching in Solomon's Portico

11Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. 12So when Peter saw *it,* he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. 14But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers. 18But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,[a] 21whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. 22For Moses truly said to the fathers, *'The* LORD *your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.* 23*And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'*[a] 24Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold[a] these days. 25You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, *'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'*[a] 26To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities."

Peter and John Arrested

4 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Addressing the Sanhedrin

5And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7And when they had set them in

3:20 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Christ Jesus, who was ordained for you before.* **3:23** [a]Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19 **3:24** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *proclaimed.* **3:25** [a]Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14



The Family of God

You will notice we say "brother" and "sister"
'round here;
It's because we're a family and these folks
are so near.
When one has a heartache we all share the tears,
And rejoice in each vict'ry in this fam'ly so dear.

I'm so glad I'm a part of the fam'ly of God!
I've been washed in the fountain,
Cleansed by His blood.
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I'm part of the fam'ly,
The fam'ly of God.

From the door of an orph'nage to the house of
the King,
No longer an outcast; a new song I sing.
From rags unto riches, from the weak to the strong,
I'm not worthy to be here, but praise God, I belong!

I'm so glad I'm a part of the fam'ly of God!
I've been washed in the fountain,
Cleansed by His blood.
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,
For I'm part of the fam'ly,
The fam'ly of God.

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

ACTS 4:32

It was Good Friday and the kids had come home early from school. We had just put the Easter eggs we had dyed on Thursday night in the big yellow basket filled with shredded paper grass when the phone rang. A voice on the other end of the line said, "There's been an explosion at the Faust garage. Ronnie Garner was badly burned. He got out of the building just before it blew apart. But he isn't expected to make it through the night. Some of us are gathering at the church to pray. Call someone else, ask them to pray, and to keep the prayer chain going." I hung up the phone and called Bill at the office. I gathered the children around to pray for this young father from our church. Then I called a few others I knew would join us in prayer.

From Methodist Burn Center in Indianapolis we heard that the doctors had decided not to treat Ron; it was no use. There was little chance of success, and the trauma of treatment itself could push him over the edge. But friends who gathered at the church prayed all the more fervently for Ron, for Darlene, and for their two little girls. All through Friday and Saturday night, the church prayed. With part of our hearts we believed, but, to be honest, with the other part we braced ourselves for the predicted news.

A weary and somewhat tattered group gathered for church on Sunday morning. We lacked the optimism typical of an Easter celebration. The pastor wasn't there at first; we knew he was with Darlene and the family. No one felt like singing songs of victory. Resurrection seemed a million light-years away. But as the music began, a few weak voices sang less-than-harmonious chords of well-worn Easter songs.

As we were making an effort at worship, our pastor entered from the back and made his way up the center aisle to the platform. His shoulders were slumped, his suit was wrinkled, but there was a glow on his stubbled face as he motioned for us to stop the hymn.

"Ron is alive," he said. "They said he wouldn't make it through Friday

night, so they're amazed he's alive today. The doctors don't understand how he's hanging on, but we do, don't we? And because he's still alive, they've decided to start treatment."

A chorus of "Amen!" and "Praise the Lord!" rose from the congregation. We all straightened in our seats like wilted plants that had been watered.

"We're going to thank the Lord," Pastor McCurdy said, "and then we're going to see this thing through. This is just the beginning. There will be many needs. The family will need food brought in. Darlene may need help with the kids. They may need transportation back and forth to Indianapolis. Ron will need gallons of blood for transfusions. And they all—the doctors too—need prayer. Let's think of how each of us can help. We are, after all, the family of God. Now let's pray."

We stood and as one voice thanked God for answered prayer and for the reality of the Resurrection. Sunshine streamed in through the windows to warm more than our faces and the room. It seemed that the light of the dawn of the very first Easter morning had come to our weary souls. What a service of rejoicing we had! No sermon could have spoken as articulately as the news of Ron's life and answered prayer.

In the car Bill and I said to each other, "You know, the amazing thing is, they'd do that for us too." We weren't model church members, Bill and I. We were gone virtually every weekend, barely getting in from a concert in time to make it to church Sunday morning. We were never there to bake pies for the bake sales or to attend the couples' retreats or to teach in Bible school. If you had to pull your share of the load to get the family of God to take care of you, we would surely have been left out. "But they'd do that for us," we marveled.

When we got home, I checked the roast in the oven, changed the babies, and sent Suzanne off to put on her play clothes. Bill went to the piano, and I heard him toying with a simple, lovely tune. "Honey, come here a minute," he called from the family room.

He sang a phrase, "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God. Dah, dah, dah, la la la-la, la la la-la."

I grabbed a yellow legal pad and a pencil. The roast was forgotten as we were both consumed by the beauty of "the family," and I put our hearts into words.

Pastor McCurdy was right: that Sunday news was only the beginning. But, then, the Resurrection was only a beginning too! There were months of trips to Indianapolis. Many made casseroles and babysat and cleaned Darlene's house. Most sent cards of encouragement and notes assuring the Garners of continued prayer.

And I am filled with joy that the same family that stood by the Garners in a thousand ways has stood by us too. We don't deserve it; we haven't earned it. We were just born into it. They treat us like royalty, because we are! We're children of the King!

the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

[8]Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: [9]If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, [10]let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. [11]This is the *'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'*[a] [12]Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

The Name of Jesus Forbidden

[13]Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. [14]And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. [15]But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, [16]saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. [17]But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."

[18]So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. [19]But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. [20]For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." [21]So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. [22]For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

Prayer for Boldness

[23]And being let go, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. [24]So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, [25]who by the mouth of Your servant David[a] have said:

'Why did the nations rage,
And the people plot vain things?
[26] *The kings of the earth took their stand,*
And the rulers were gathered together
Against the LORD *and against His*
Christ.'[a]

[27]"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together [28]to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. [29]Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, [30]by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

[31]And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Sharing in All Things

[32]Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. [33]And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. [34]Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, [35]and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

[36]And Joses,[a] who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of

4:11 [a]Psalm 118:22 **4:25** [a]NU-Text reads *who through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father, Your servant David.* **4:26** [a]Psalm 2:1, 2
4:36 [a]NU-Text reads *Joseph.*

the country of Cyprus, [37]having land, sold *it,* and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

Fine music without devotion is but a splendid garment upon a corpse.
CHARLES SPURGEON

Lying to the Holy Spirit

5 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. [2]And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it,* and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. [3]But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? [4]While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

[5]Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. [6]And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried *him* out, and buried *him.*

[7]Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. [8]And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?"

She said, "Yes, for so much."

[9]Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and they will carry you out." [10]Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried *her* by her husband. [11]So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

Continuing Power in the Church

[12]And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. [13]Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. [14]And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, [15]so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. [16]Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Imprisoned Apostles Freed

[17]Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, [18]and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. [19]But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, [20]"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

[21]And when they heard *that,* they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

Apostles on Trial Again

[22]But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, [23]saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside[a] before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!" [24]Now when the high priest,[a] the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. [25]So one came and told them, saying,[a] "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

[26]Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. [27]And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, [28]saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"

5:23 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *outside.* **5:24** [a]NU-Text omits *the high priest.* **5:25** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *saying.*

[29]But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. [30]The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. [31]Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. [32]And we are His witnesses to these things, and *so* also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

Gamaliel's Advice

[33]When they heard *this,* they were furious and plotted to kill them. [34]Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. [35]And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. [36]For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. [37]After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. [38]And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; [39]but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."

[40]And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them,* they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. [41]So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His[a] name. [42]And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

Seven Chosen to Serve

6 Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists,[a] because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. [2]Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. [3]Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; [4]but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

[5]And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, [6]whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

[7]Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Stephen Accused of Blasphemy

[8]And Stephen, full of faith[a] and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. [9]Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. [10]And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. [11]Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." [12]And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him,* seized him, and brought *him* to the council. [13]They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous[a] words against this holy place and the law; [14]for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." [15]And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

5:41 [a]NU-Text reads *the name;* M-Text reads *the name of Jesus.* **6:1** [a]That is, Greek-speaking Jews **6:8** [a]NU-Text reads *grace.* **6:13** [a]NU-Text omits *blasphemous.*



Stephen's Address: The Call of Abraham

7 Then the high priest said, "Are these
things so?"

2 And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3 and said to him, *'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.'*[a] 4 Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. 5 And *God* gave him no inheritance in it, not even *enough* to set his foot on. But even when *Abraham* had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. 6 But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress *them* four hundred years. 7 *'And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,'*[a] said God, *'and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.'*[b] 8 Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so *Abraham* begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac *begot* Jacob, and Jacob *begot* the twelve patriarchs.

The Patriarchs in Egypt

9 "And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him 10 and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. 11 Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. 13 And the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh. 14 Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to *him,* seventy-five[a] people. 15 So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. 16 And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem.

God Delivers Israel by Moses

17 "But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt 18 till another king arose who did not know Joseph. 19 This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. 20 At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. 21 But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. 22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

23 "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. 25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. 26 And the next day he appeared to *two of* them as they were fighting, and *tried to* reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' 27 But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, *'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?'*[a] 29 Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.

30 "And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord[a] appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. 31 When Moses saw *it,* he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, 32 *saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'*[a] And Moses trembled and dared not look. 33 *'Then the* LORD *said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. 34 I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt."*[a]

7:3 [a]Genesis 12:1 **7:7** [a]Genesis 15:14 [b]Exodus 3:12 **7:14** [a]Or *seventy* (compare Exodus 1:5) **7:28** [a]Exodus 2:14 **7:30** [a]NU-Text omits *of the Lord.* **7:32** [a]Exodus 3:6, 15 **7:34** [a]Exodus 3:5, 7, 8, 10

35 "This Moses whom they rejected, saying, *'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'*[a] is the one God sent *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

Israel Rebels Against God

37 "This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel,[a] *'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.'*[b]

38 "This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, 39 whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, *'Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'*[a] 41 And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42 Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:

'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals
and sacrifices during forty years in
the wilderness,
O house of Israel?
43 *You also took up the tabernacle of*
Moloch,
And the star of your god Remphan,
Images which you made to worship;
And I will carry you away beyond
Babylon.'[a]

God's True Tabernacle

44 "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, 45 which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, 46 who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built Him a house.

48 "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:

49 *'Heaven is My throne,*
And earth is My footstool.
What house will you build for Me? says
the LORD,
Or what is the place of My rest?
50 *Has My hand not made all these*
things?'[a]

Israel Resists the Holy Spirit

51 "*You* stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did,* so *do* you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it.*"

Stephen the Martyr

54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him.* And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Saul Persecutes the Church

8 Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen

7:35 [a]Exodus 2:14 **7:37** [a]Deuteronomy 18:15 [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Him you shall hear.* **7:40** [a]Exodus 32:1, 23 **7:43** [a]Amos 5:25–27 **7:50** [a]Isaiah 66:1, 2

Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

ACTS 9:18

When Charles Wesley was born in 1707, he had quite the pedigree in the Church of England: His father was a minister. His fathers' father was a minister. His father's father's father was a minister. By the time he was nineteen, his oldest brother, Samuel, was already a minister, and his other brother, John, was well on his way. Charles followed John to prestigious Christ Church, Oxford, where the two Wesleys made their mark, forming a group called the Oxford Methodists—so named by fellow students for their rigid, by-the-book methods for living the Christian life. This small band of collegians met weekly, fasted regularly, and abstained from college amusements. But there's a big difference between knowing *about* God and truly *knowing* Him, as the Wesley brothers would eventually find out.

Right after college, Charles and John went on a missionary journey to Georgia, hoping to convert the colony of British convicts. As it turns out, the people were less than receptive to their demanding, domineering ways. Charles only lasted a few months before returning to England, dejected and frustrated. John soon followed him, and as they sought to recover from the experience, they began attending meetings with a Moravian Christian named Peter Boehler. One Sunday night, struggling with doubt and his bondage to sin, he surrendered his life to Christ. Like the apostle Paul, Charles realized that his religious pedigree, his staunch regard for the law, and his so-called good works were all worthless compared to knowing Christ (Phil. 3:4–8). He had failed at living a holy life on his own, and as he later recorded in his journal, "I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ. I saw that by faith I stood."

Finally knowing the love and acceptance of Christ, Charles wrote this hymn expressing his joy, freedom, and amazement at the Lord's love. *I woke, the dungeon flamed with light. My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth, and followed thee.*

And Can It Be that I Should Gain?

Charles Wesley | 1738

1. And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain–
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

2. He left His Father's throne above
So free, so infinite His grace–
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For O my God, it found out me!
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For O my God, it found out me!

3. Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray–
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

4. No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through
Christ my own.
Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through
Christ my own.

to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

[3]As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

Christ Is Preached in Samaria

[4]Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. [5]Then Philip went down to the[a] city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. [6]And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. [7]For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. [8]And there was great joy in that city.

The Sorcerer's Profession of Faith

[9]But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, [10]to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." [11]And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. [12]But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. [13]Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

The Sorcerer's Sin

[14]Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, [15]who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. [16]For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [17]Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

[18]And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, [19]saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

[20]But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! [21]You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. [22]Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. [23]For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

[24]Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."

[25]So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian

[26]Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. [27]So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, [28]was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. [29]Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

[30]So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

[31]And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. [32]The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before its shearer is
silent,
So He opened not His mouth.
[33] *In His humiliation His justice was*
taken away,
And who will declare His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth."[a]

[34]So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet

8:5 [a]Or *a* **8:33** [a]Isaiah 53:7, 8

say this, of himself or of some other man?" [35]Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. [36]Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?"

[37]Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may."

And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."[a]

[38]So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. [39]Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. [40]But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

A good hymn should be like a good prayer—simple, real, earnest, and reverent.

WILLIAM WALSHAM HOW

The Damascus Road: Saul Converted

9 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest [2]and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

[3]As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. [4]Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

[5]And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"

Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.[a] It *is* hard for you to kick against the goads."

[6]So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Then the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

[7]And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. [8]Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought *him* into Damascus. [9]And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Ananias Baptizes Saul

[10]Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias."

And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

[11]So the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. [12]And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

[13]Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. [14]And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

[15]But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. [16]For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

[17]And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus,[a] who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." [18]Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

[19]So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

Saul Preaches Christ

[20]Immediately he preached the Christ[a] in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

[21]Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has

8:37 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit this verse. It is found in Western texts, including the Latin tradition. **9:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the last sentence of verse 5 and begin verse 6 with *But arise and go.* **9:17** [a]M-Text omits *Jesus.* **9:20** [a]NU-Text reads *Jesus.*

Thanks to Calvary (I Don't Live Here Anymore)

Today, I went down to the place where I used to go
Today, I saw the same old crowd I knew before
And when they asked me what had happened,
I tried to tell them,
Thanks to Calvary, I don't come here anymore.
Thanks to Calv'ry I am not the man I used to be—

Thanks to Calv'ry things are different than before—
While the tears ran down my face, I tried to
tell them
"Thanks to Calv'ry I don't come here anymore."

Then we went down to the house where we used
to live,
My little girl ran behind the door, like so many
times before;
And I said "Honey you don't need to be afraid,
you've got a new Daddy now,
Thanks to Calv'ry we don't live here anymore.



And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. . . . And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

ACTS 9:26, 27

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

When Bill and I were first married and just began writing songs, Doug Oldham began attending our church. We knew Doug and his family. Doug had been a part of his father's ministry and of several other ministries. But Doug's life had fallen apart: his wife, Laura, had taken the children and left; the popularity he once enjoyed had changed to loneliness and despair. At one point Doug was so desperate and depressed that he had taken a loaded revolver and driven around, trying to get the nerve to kill himself. As he drove he was aware enough of the presence of the Lord to cry out loud to this God he thought he'd left behind, "If You're there, either give me something worth living for or the guts to pull this trigger."

Doug did not end his life that day but instead began the process of letting God put the broken pieces of his life back together. Doug admitted that what was wrong was not the fault of his parents or the church or his wife, but it was a result of his own selfish choices. He realized how he'd hurt the ones who loved him most and asked God for forgiveness. Then he tried to reestablish the broken lines of communication so he could ask forgiveness of those whose lives he'd torn apart.

Eventually and gradually, with a lot of prayer and efforts at communication, Doug and Laura put their home back together and rebuilt a fragile but growing trust. Sometimes Laura doubted that what they had left to work with was enough to mend such a fractured relationship. She wrote this about those fears:

One day several months down the road, I had a real attack of anxiety over whether I could ever really trust Doug again. The enemy of our souls can really work on a

woman's imagination and he had me in his grip.

I went to the bedroom, got down on my knees, and prayed for help, "Help me to trust and get rid of this gnawing fear." A bit of Scripture kept coming persistently to mind. I got up, found a Bible, and looked it up in Matthew. The phrase I kept hearing was, "The one whom you feared is dead." The Scripture refers to Herod. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, "Take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead" (Matt. 2:20). The Lord was very plainly saying to me, "The Doug you feared is dead. Take the children and go home," which I had done. When the Lord saves a man and changes him, the old one is dead. Now the task for me was to believe it.

Not only did Laura need assurance from God, their three little girls had to learn to live without fear and to relate to the new Doug, who was becoming a real father.

To begin again, Doug and Laura even sold their old house and bought a new one that held no bad memories. On one visit to the old house to retrieve belongings, Doug's daughter ran and hid behind the door as she had many times before when she'd heard her daddy coming. Seeing this, Doug went to his child and stooped down to talk to her. "Honey, you don't have to be afraid. You've got a new daddy now," he whispered. "Thanks to Calvary, we don't live here anymore."

A few days later, when Doug and Laura told Bill and me that story, we were inspired to write the song Doug was to sing for years afterward. It was and has continued to be Doug's song.



come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"

[22]But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ.

Saul Escapes Death

[23]Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. [24]But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. [25]Then the disciples took him by night and let *him* down through the wall in a large basket.

Saul at Jerusalem

[26]And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. [27]But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. [28]So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. [29]And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. [30]When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

The Church Prospers

[31]Then the churches[a] throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

Aeneas Healed

[32]Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all *parts of the country,* that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. [33]There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. [34]And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. [35]So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

Dorcas Restored to Life

[36]At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. [37]But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room. [38]And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them. [39]Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. [40]But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. [41]Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. [42]And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. [43]So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.

Cornelius Sends a Delegation

10 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, [2]a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. [3]About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

[4]And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?"

So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. [5]Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. [6]He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.[a] He will tell you what you must do." [7]And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him

9:31 [a]NU-Text reads *church . . . was edified.* **10:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the last sentence of this verse.

continually. [8]So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

[9]The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. [10]Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance [11]and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. [12]In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. [13]And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

[14]But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

[15]And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." [16]This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Summoned to Caesarea

[17]Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. [18]And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

[19]While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. [20]Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

[21]Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius,[a] and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"

[22]And they said, "Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." [23]Then he invited them in and lodged *them.*

On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Peter Meets Cornelius

[24]And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. [25]As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him.* [26]But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." [27]And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. [28]Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. [29]Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"

[30]So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour[a] I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, [31]and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. [32]Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.[a] When he comes, he will speak to you.' [33]So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

Preaching to Cornelius' Household

[34]Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. [35]But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. [36]The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— [37]that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: [38]how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. [39]And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom

10:21 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *who had been sent to him from Cornelius.*
10:30 [a]NU-Text reads *Four days ago to this hour, at the ninth hour.*
10:32 [a]NU-Text omits the last sentence of this verse.

they[a] killed by hanging on a tree. 40Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, 41not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. 42And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. 43To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

44While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, 47"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have?*" 48And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Peter Defends God's Grace

11 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, 3saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

4But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying: 5"I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. 6When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 7And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' 8But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.' 9But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' 10Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. 12Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 14who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' 15And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. 16Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave* us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

18When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

Barnabas and Saul at Antioch

19Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. 20But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

22Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. 23When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. 24For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

25Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. 26And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

10:39 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *also.*

Relief to Judea

27 And in these days prophets came from
Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 Then one of them,
named Agabus, stood up and showed by
the Spirit that there was going to be a great
famine throughout all the world, which
also happened in the days of Claudius
Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, each accord-
ing to his ability, determined to send relief
to the brethren dwelling in Judea. 30 This
they also did, and sent it to the elders by
the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Herod's Violence to the Church

12 Now about that time Herod the king
stretched out *his* hand to harass some
from the church. 2 Then he killed James
the brother of John with the sword. 3 And
because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he
proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now
it was *during* the Days of Unleavened Bread.
4 So when he had arrested him, he put *him*
in prison, and delivered *him* to four squads
of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring
him before the people after Passover.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord. | ACTS 12:10

Two times, the apostle Peter loved like he was leaving. In both cases, there was strong evidence that he would be in eternity before the sun came up. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane when Peter discovered the true meaning of Jesus' warning "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). For the love of Jesus, he almost died in that garden. The second story, recorded in Acts 12, describes Peter in Herod's prison, expecting to be martyred by dawn as James the brother of John had been martyred. Both stories describe Peter as mere hours from death. However, in the first case, Peter was desperately striving in the flesh to love because he knew the issue was grave and the time was short. While in Herod's prison, he was perfectly at rest and had learned to love in a supernaturally natural way, knowing that the sand in his glass was spent. It was the same Peter, but the contrast between the pre-Pentecost Peter and the post-Pentecost Peter is remarkable. He had learned the secret of truly loving like he was leaving.

Pre-Pentecost Peter loved Jesus. No one can doubt that it was deep love and affection for Jesus that brought forth Peter's confession of loyalty. His mistake, of course, was placing his confidence in his own determination and sincerity. He leaned hard on the power of his will to keep his vows and resolutions. When he drew his sword and struck the ear of the high priest's slave in the presence of a hostile Roman cohort and an angry crowd armed with swords and clubs, it was like signing his own death warrant. The warnings that Jesus had given Peter about the flesh being weak did not keep him from rising courageously in the flesh to defend Jesus to the death. If Jesus had not

Peter Freed from Prison

5 Peter was therefore kept in prison,
but constant[a] prayer was offered to God
for him by the church. 6 And when Herod
was about to bring him out, that night
Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains
between two soldiers; and the guards
before the door were keeping the prison.
7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood
by *him,* and a light shone in the prison; and
he struck Peter on the side and raised him
up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains
fell off *his* hands. 8 Then the angel said to
him, "Gird yourself and tie on your san-
dals"; and so he did. And he said to him,
"Put on your garment and follow me." 9 So
he went out and followed him, and did not
know that what was done by the angel was
real, but thought he was seeing a vision.
10 When they were past the first and the
second guard posts, they came to the iron
gate that leads to the city, which opened
to them of its own accord; and they went

12:5 [a]NU-Text reads *constantly* (or *earnestly*).

intervened, Peter would have been killed. Natural courage is soon turned to cowardice and fear. You know the sequel that was played out in the courtyard!

What an amazing contrast with post-Pentecost Peter in Herod's prison. Although Peter was not martyred with James but lived another twenty years, he eventually followed his Lord in crucifixion. There was much tension for Peter in Gethsemane, but in Herod's prison we read that he was soundly sleeping. Four Roman guards were assigned to Peter for every six-hour shift. A guard was chained to each of his wrists and two guarded the prison door. Yet he was enjoying a peaceful rest. It is almost comical to read that an angel of God had to come and kick him in the ribs to awaken him. What a beautiful peace Peter was enjoying the night before it appeared he was leaving. His body may have been chained, but his heart was free.

The Bible record will not allow us to conclude that faith is passive. Faith is active. Peter must do what Peter can do, and God will do what Peter cannot do. God caused the shackles to fall from Peter's hands. Peter had no power to do that. Peter was told by the angel to get dressed and put on his sandals. Peter could do that. The angel would not do for Peter what Peter could do for himself. Peter was told to follow the angel. Why? He could do that.

Peter couldn't open the prison door, so God did that. They walked to the iron city gate, we read, "which opened to them of its own accord" (v. 10). God must do the impossible, but Peter must do the possible. When Peter was seventy-five feet from the iron gate, it remained closed; when Peter was fifteen feet from the gate, it remained closed. The gate did not open until Peter reached the gate. This is what it means to love like you're leaving. It means to rest in the Lord and keep walking. If there is something in our power to do, we do it. If there is something impossible, we allow the Lord to do it. We do not need to work ourselves into a frenzy because we know our days are numbered. Love as if you are leaving. Rest in the Lord and keep walking. Let the Lord open all of your iron gates.

out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

11And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and *from* all the expectation of the Jewish people."

12So, when he had considered *this,* he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. 13And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14When she recognized Peter's voice, because of *her* gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. 15But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel."

16Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished. 17But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place.

18Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. 19But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that *they* should be put to death.

And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there.*

Herod's Violent Death

20Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king's *country.*

21So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. 22And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" 23Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.

24But the word of God grew and multiplied.

Barnabas and Saul Appointed

25And Barnabas and Saul returned from[a] Jerusalem when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.

13 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

Preaching in Cyprus

4So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as *their* assistant.

6Now when they had gone through the island[a] to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name *was* Bar-Jesus, 7who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9Then Saul, who also *is called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit,

12:25 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *to.* **13:6** [a]NU-Text reads *the whole island.*

looked intently at him [10]and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? [11]And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time."

And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. [12]Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

At Antioch in Pisidia

[13]Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. [14]But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. [15]And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men *and* brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

[16]Then Paul stood up, and motioning with *his* hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: [17]The God of this people Israel[a] chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. [18]Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. [19]And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

[20]"After that He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. [21]And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. [22]And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, *'I have found David*[a] the *son* of Jesse, *a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'*[b] [23]From this man's seed, according to *the* promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—[a] [24]after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. [25]And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not *He*. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'

[26]"Men *and* brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. [27]For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him*. [28]And though they found no cause for death *in Him,* they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. [29]Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree and laid *Him* in a tomb. [30]But God raised Him from the dead. [31]He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. [32]And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. [33]God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:

> *'You are My Son,*
> *Today I have begotten You.'*[a]

[34]And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:

> *'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'*[a]

[35]Therefore He also says in another *Psalm:*

> *'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'*[a]

[36]"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; [37]but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. [38]Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; [39]and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you

13:17 [a]M-Text omits *Israel.* **13:22** [a]Psalm 89:20 [b]1 Samuel 13:14
13:23 [a]M-Text reads *for Israel salvation.* **13:33** [a]Psalm 2:7
13:34 [a]Isaiah 55:3 **13:35** [a]Psalm 16:10

could not be justified by the law of Moses.
40 Beware therefore, lest what has been
spoken in the prophets come upon you:

41 *'Behold, you despisers,*
Marvel and perish!
For I work a work in your days,
A work which you will by no means
believe,
Though one were to declare it
to you."[a]

Blessing and Conflict at Antioch

42 So when the Jews went out of the
synagogue,[a] the Gentiles begged that these
words might be preached to them the next
Sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation had
broken up, many of the Jews and devout
proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas,
who, speaking to them, persuaded them to
continue in the grace of God.

44 On the next Sabbath almost the
whole city came together to hear the word
of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the mul-
titudes, they were filled with envy; and
contradicting and blaspheming, they
opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46 Then
Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It
was necessary that the word of God should
be spoken to you first; but since you reject
it, and judge yourselves unworthy of ever-
lasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.
47 For so the Lord has commanded us:

'I have set you as a light to the
Gentiles,
That you should be for salvation to the
ends of the earth."[a]

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this,
they were glad and glorified the word of the
Lord. And as many as had been appointed
to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was being
spread throughout all the region. 50 But the
Jews stirred up the devout and prominent
women and the chief men of the city, raised
up persecution against Paul and Barnabas,
and expelled them from their region. 51 But
they shook off the dust from their feet
against them, and came to Iconium. 52 And
the disciples were filled with joy and with
the Holy Spirit.

At Iconium

14 Now it happened in Iconium that
they went together to the synagogue
of the Jews, and so spoke that a great mul-
titude both of the Jews and of the Greeks
believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred
up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds
against the brethren. 3 Therefore they
stayed there a long time, speaking boldly
in the Lord, who was bearing witness to
the word of His grace, granting signs and
wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was
divided: part sided with the Jews, and part
with the apostles. 5 And when a violent
attempt was made by both the Gentiles
and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and
stone them, 6 they became aware of it and
fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia,
and to the surrounding region. 7 And they
were preaching the gospel there.

Idolatry at Lystra

8 And in Lystra a certain man without
strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple
from his mother's womb, who had never
walked. 9 *This* man heard Paul speaking.
Paul, observing him intently and seeing
that he had faith to be healed, 10 said with a
loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!"
And he leaped and walked. 11 Now when the
people saw what Paul had done, they raised
their voices, saying in the Lycaonian *lan-
guage,* "The gods have come down to us in
the likeness of men!" 12 And Barnabas they
called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he
was the chief speaker. 13 Then the priest of
Zeus, whose temple was in front of their
city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates,
intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.

14 But when the apostles Barnabas and
Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and
ran in among the multitude, crying out
15 and saying, "Men, why are you doing these
things? We also are men with the same
nature as you, and preach to you that you
should turn from these useless things to the
living God, who made the heaven, the earth,
the sea, and all things that are in them, 16 who
in bygone generations allowed all nations to

13:41 [a]Habakkuk 1:5 **13:42** [a]Or *And when they went out of the synagogue of the Jews;* NU-Text reads *And when they went out, they begged.*
13:47 [a]Isaiah 49:6

walk in their own ways. [17]Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." [18]And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

Stoning, Escape to Derbe

[19]Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead. [20]However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

Strengthening the Converts

[21]And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, [22]strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying,* "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." [23]So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. [24]And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. [25]Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. [26]From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

[27]Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. [28]So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

Conflict over Circumcision

15 And certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." [2]Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

[3]So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. [4]And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. [5]But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses."

The Jerusalem Council

[6]Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. [7]And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them: "Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. [8]So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, [9]and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. [10]Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? [11]But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ[a] we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

[12]Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. [13]And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men *and* brethren, listen to me: [14]Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. [15]And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

[16] *'After this I will return*
And will rebuild the tabernacle of
David, which has fallen down;
I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will set it up;
[17] *So that the rest of mankind may seek*
the LORD,
Even all the Gentiles who are called by
My name,

15:11 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Christ.*

Says the LORD *who does all these things.*'[a]

18"Known to God from eternity are all His works.[a] 19Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, 20but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality,[a] *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. 21For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

The Jerusalem Decree

22Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, *namely,* Judas who was also named Barsabas,[a] and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

23They wrote this *letter* by them:

The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,

To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings.

24Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "*You must* be circumcised and keep the law"[a] —to whom we gave no *such* commandment— 25it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. 28For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.[a] If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Farewell.

Continuing Ministry in Syria

30So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. 31When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. 32Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. 33And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.[a]

34However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.[a] 35Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Division over John Mark

36Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing." 37Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 38But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; 40but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. 41And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

16 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. 2He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father

15:17 [a]Amos 9:11, 12 **15:18** [a]NU-Text (combining with verse 17) reads *Says the Lord, who makes these things known from eternity (of old).* **15:20** [a]Or *fornication* **15:22** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Barsabbas.* **15:24** [a]NU-Text omits *saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law."* **15:29** [a]Or *fornication* **15:33** [a]NU-Text reads *to those who had sent them.* **15:34** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit this verse.

was Greek. 4And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. 5So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

The Macedonian Call

6Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. 7After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit[a] did not permit them. 8So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Lydia Baptized at Philippi

11Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* came to Neapolis, 12and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. 13And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there*. 14Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas Imprisoned

16Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." 18And this she did for many days.

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. 19But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.

20And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; 21and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." 22Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. 23And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

> *But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*
> ACTS 16:25

The Philippian Jailer Saved

25But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

29Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32Then they spoke the word of

16:7 [a]NU-Text adds *of Jesus*.

the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his *family* were baptized. 34Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

Paul Refuses to Depart Secretly

35And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, "Let those men go."

36So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace."

37But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, *and* have thrown *us* into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."

38And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid



RODNEY GRIFFIN • Homecoming Artist, *Greater Vision*

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. | ACTS 16:25–33

God inhabits the praise of His people. He loves it. He can't get enough of it. He wants to be the obvious center of our attention. He's jealous. These are some of the thoughts that ran through my mind one day as I thought about our praise to the Father. I wanted people to picture God desiring to hear from them. And so, I started thinking about a good way to put this into a song.

When I start a song, I usually outline in my mind what it is exactly that I want to say. I don't want to chase any rabbits. I want the thought that motivated the writing of the song to be loud and clear. As I contemplated the circumstances in life as they relate to our desire to praise, I realized that we tend to praise the Lord only when things are going our way. The bills are paid, the family's well, our health is good, so let's praise the Lord! This is how we think. But what about when the bottom falls out? Is He disqualified from our praise then? Wouldn't He love to hear praise from one of His children who is battling cancer? Wouldn't it bless His heart to be honored by His children who had just lost their jobs? Surely it would.

When I want to make a point in a song, I usually search my mind for a Bible story that best portrays what I'm trying to say. In this case, I began to think,

when they heard that they were Romans.
39 Then they came and pleaded with them
and brought *them* out, and asked *them* to
depart from the city. 40 So they went out of
the prison and entered *the house of* Lydia;
and when they had seen the brethren, they
encouraged them and departed.

Preaching Christ at Thessalonica

17 Now when they had passed through
Amphipolis and Apollonia, they
came to Thessalonica, where there was a
synagogue of the Jews. 2 Then Paul, as his
custom was, went in to them, and for three
Sabbaths reasoned with them from the
Scriptures, 3 explaining and demonstrating
that the Christ had to suffer and rise again
from the dead, and *saying,* "This Jesus
whom I preach to you is the Christ." 4 And
some of them were persuaded; and a great
multitude of the devout Greeks, and not
a few of the leading women, joined Paul
and Silas.

"Who in the Bible sang to the Lord while in a difficult circumstance?" Paul and Silas immediately came to mind. There they were, on a mission for God, selflessly doing His work at His command, yet they hit a brick wall. Thrown into a Philippian jail, their backs bruised and bleeding, they had a choice: Would they complain to God (like we do) or praise God? You know the story. Even in that dark, dirty jail cell, with backs aching, at midnight, they sang. God listened. And He loved what He was hearing. Long story short, because Paul and Silas trusted God in this difficult time, the jailer was saved, the chains fell off, and the rest of us have an example of what to do in the storm—sing!

No other song Greater Vision has ever recorded has produced so many testimonies, letters, and emails as this song. I'm in total awe of God's goodness. I'm even learning to sing in the storm myself. How about you?

GOD WANTS TO HEAR YOU SING

Their chains were fastened tight
Down at the jail that night.
Still Paul and Silas would not be
dismayed
They said, "It's time to lift our voice"
"Sing praises to the Lord"
"Let's prove that we will trust Him
come what may"

Chorus:
God wants to hear you sing
When the waves are crashing 'round you
When the fiery darts surround you
When despair is all you see
God wants to hear your voice
When the wisest man has spoken
And says, "Your circumstance is as
hopeless as can be"
That's when God wants to hear you sing

He loves to hear our praise
On our cheerful days
When the pleasant times outweigh
the bad, by far
But when suffering comes along
And we still sing Him songs
That is when we bless the Father's heart

Words and Music by Rodney Griffin,
©2000 *Songs of Greater Vision*, BMI.

Assault on Jason's House

5But the Jews who were not persuaded,
becoming envious,[a] took some of the evil
men from the marketplace, and gathering
a mob, set all the city in an uproar and
attacked the house of Jason, and sought to
bring them out to the people. 6But when
they did not find them, they dragged Jason
and some brethren to the rulers of the city,
crying out, "These who have turned the
world upside down have come here too.
7Jason has harbored them, and these are all
acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar,
saying there is another king—Jesus." 8And
they troubled the crowd and the rulers of
the city when they heard these things. 9So
when they had taken security from Jason
and the rest, they let them go.

Ministering at Berea

10Then the brethren immediately sent
Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.
When they arrived, they went into the
synagogue of the Jews. 11These were more
fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in
that they received the word with all readi-
ness, and searched the Scriptures daily
to find out whether these things were so.
12Therefore many of them believed, and also
not a few of the Greeks, prominent women
as well as men. 13But when the Jews from
Thessalonica learned that the word of God
was preached by Paul at Berea, they came
there also and stirred up the crowds. 14Then
immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to
go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy
remained there. 15So those who conducted
Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a
command for Silas and Timothy to come to
him with all speed, they departed.

The Philosophers at Athens

16Now while Paul waited for them at
Athens, his spirit was provoked within
him when he saw that the city was given
over to idols. 17Therefore he reasoned
in the synagogue with the Jews and with
the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the market-
place daily with those who happened to be
there. 18Then[a] certain Epicurean and Stoic
philosophers encountered him. And some
said, "What does this babbler want to say?"
Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer
of foreign gods," because he preached to
them Jesus and the resurrection.
19And they took him and brought him to
the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what
this new doctrine *is* of which you speak?
20For you are bringing some strange things
to our ears. Therefore we want to know
what these things mean." 21For all the
Athenians and the foreigners who were
there spent their time in nothing else but
either to tell or to hear some new thing.

Addressing the Areopagus

22Then Paul stood in the midst of the
Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I
perceive that in all things you are very reli-
gious; 23for as I was passing through and
considering the objects of your worship, I
even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship
without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:
24"God, who made the world and everything
in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth,
does not dwell in temples made with hands.
25Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as
though He needed anything, since He gives
to all life, breath, and all things. 26And He
has made from one blood[a] every nation of
men to dwell on all the face of the earth,
and has determined their preappointed
times and the boundaries of their dwell-
ings, 27so that they should seek the Lord,
in the hope that they might grope for Him
and find Him, though He is not far from
each one of us; 28for in Him we live and
move and have our being, as also some of
your own poets have said, 'For we are also
His offspring.' 29Therefore, since we are the
offspring of God, we ought not to think that
the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or
stone, something shaped by art and man's
devising. 30Truly, these times of ignorance
God overlooked, but now commands all
men everywhere to repent, 31because He has
appointed a day on which He will judge the
world in righteousness by the Man whom
He has ordained. He has given assurance of
this to all by raising Him from the dead."

17:5 [a]NU-Text omits *who were not persuaded;* M-Text omits *becoming envious.*
17:18 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *also.* **17:26** [a]NU-Text omits *blood.*

[32]And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this *matter.*" [33]So Paul departed from among them. [34]However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Ministering at Corinth

18 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. [2]And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. [3]So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. [4]And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

[5]When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *is* the Christ. [6]But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." [7]And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus,[a] *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. [8]Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

[9]Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; [10]for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." [11]And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

[12]When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, [13]saying, "This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."

[14]And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. [15]But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters.*" [16]And he drove them from the judgment seat. [17]Then all the Greeks[a] took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

Paul Returns to Antioch

[18]So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. [19]And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. [20]When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, [21]but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem;[a] but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus.

[22]And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. [23]After he had spent some time *there,* he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

Ministry of Apollos

[24]Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. [25]This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. [26]So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. [27]And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; [28]for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

18:7 [a]NU-Text reads *Titius Justus.* **18:17** [a]NU-Text reads *they all.*
18:21 [a]NU-Text omits *I must* through *Jerusalem.*

Paul at Ephesus

19 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples [2]he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

[3]And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?"

So they said, "Into John's baptism."

[4]Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

[5]When they heard *this,* they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [6]And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. [7]Now the men were about twelve in all.

[8]And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. [9]But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. [10]And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Miracles Glorify Christ

[11]Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, [12]so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. [13]Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We[a] exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." [14]Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

[15]And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

[16]Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered[a] them, and prevailed against them,[b] so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. [17]This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. [18]And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. [19]Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. [20]So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

The Riot at Ephesus

[21]When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." [22]So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

[23]And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. [24]For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana,[a] brought no small profit to the craftsmen. [25]He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. [26]Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. [27]So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed,[a] whom all Asia and the world worship."

[28]Now when they heard *this,* they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!" [29]So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. [30]And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. [31]Then some of the officials

19:13 [a]NU-Text reads *I.* **19:16** [a]M-Text reads *and they overpowered.* [b]NU-Text reads *both of them.* **19:24** [a]Greek *Artemis* **19:27** [a]NU-Text reads *she be deposed from her magnificence.*

of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. 32Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. 34But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!"

35And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Zeus? 36Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. 37For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your[a] goddess. 38Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. 40For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." 41And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

Journeys in Greece

20 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself,* embraced *them,* and departed to go to Macedonia. 2Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece 3and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. 4And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. 5These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. 6But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Ministering at Troas

7Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. 8There were many lamps in the upper room where they[a] were gathered together. 9And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. 10But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

From Troas to Miletus

13Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. 14And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. 15We sailed from there, and the next *day* came opposite Chios. The following *day* we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next *day* we came to Miletus. 16For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he

19:37 [a]NU-Text reads *our.* **20:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *we.*



would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

The Ephesian Elders Exhorted

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself,[a] so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men.* 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God[a] which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34 Yes,[a] you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 35 I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem

21 Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following *day* to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. 2 And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3 When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo. 4 And finding disciples,[a] we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. 5 When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. 6 When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home.

7 And when we had finished *our* voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. 8 On the next *day* we who were Paul's companions[a] departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was *one* of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. 10 And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his *own* hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man

20:24 [a]NU-Text reads *But I do not count my life of any value or dear to myself.* **20:28** [a]M-Text reads *of the Lord and God.* **20:34** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Yes.* **21:4** [a]NU-Text reads *the disciples.* **21:8** [a]NU-Text omits *who were Paul's companions.*

who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

12Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

14So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

Paul Urged to Make Peace

15And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. 16Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge.

17And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18On the following *day* Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. 19When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20And when they heard *it,* they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; 21but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs. 22What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will[a] hear that you have come. 23Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. 24Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave *their* heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but *that* you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. 25But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written *and* decided that they should observe no such thing, except[a] that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."

Arrested in the Temple

26Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.

27Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, 28crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." 29(For they had previously[a] seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. 31Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. 34And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another.

So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. 35When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. 36For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, "Away with him!"

Addressing the Jerusalem Mob

37Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I speak to you?"

He replied, "Can you speak Greek? 38Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?"

21:22 [a]NU-Text reads *What then is to be done? They will certainly.*
21:25 [a]NU-Text omits *that they should observe no such thing, except.*
21:29 [a]M-Text omits *previously.*

39 But Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus,
in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and
I implore you, permit me to speak to the
people."
40 So when he had given him permission,
Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with
his hand to the people. And when there
was a great silence, he spoke to *them* in the
Hebrew language, saying,
22 "Brethren and fathers, hear my
defense before you now." 2 And when
they heard that he spoke to them in the
Hebrew language, they kept all the more
silent.

Then he said: 3 "I am indeed a Jew, born
in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this
city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught accord-
ing to the strictness of our fathers' law,
and was zealous toward God as you all are
today. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death,
binding and delivering into prisons both
men and women, 5 as also the high priest
bears me witness, and all the council of the
elders, from whom I also received letters
to the brethren, and went to Damascus to
bring in chains even those who were there
to Jerusalem to be punished.

6 "Now it happened, as I journeyed and
came near Damascus at about noon, sud-
denly a great light from heaven shone around
me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a
voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you
persecuting Me?' 8 So I answered, 'Who are
You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of
Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

9 "And those who were with me indeed
saw the light and were afraid,[a] but they
did not hear the voice of Him who spoke
to me. 10 So I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?'
And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into
Damascus, and there you will be told all
things which are appointed for you to do.'
11 And since I could not see for the glory of
that light, being led by the hand of those
who were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 "Then a certain Ananias, a devout
man according to the law, having a good
testimony with all the Jews who dwelt *there,*
13 came to me; and he stood and said to me,
'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at
that same hour I looked up at him. 14 Then
he said, 'The God of our fathers has cho-
sen you that you should know His will, and
see the Just One, and hear the voice of
His mouth. 15 For you will be His witness to
all men of what you have seen and heard.
16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and
be baptized, and wash away your sins, call-
ing on the name of the Lord.'

17 "Now it happened, when I returned to
Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that
I was in a trance 18 and saw Him saying to me,
'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly,
for they will not receive your testimony con-
cerning Me.' 19 So I said, 'Lord, they know that
in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat
those who believe on You. 20 And when the
blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also
was standing by consenting to his death,[a] and
guarding the clothes of those who were kill-
ing him.' 21 Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I
will send you far from here to the Gentiles.'"

Paul's Roman Citizenship

22 And they listened to him until this
word, and *then* they raised their voices and
said, "Away with such a *fellow* from the earth,
for he is not fit to live!" 23 Then, as they cried
out and tore off *their* clothes and threw dust
into the air, 24 the commander ordered him
to be brought into the barracks, and said
that he should be examined under scourg-
ing, so that he might know why they shouted
so against him. 25 And as they bound him
with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who
stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a
man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

26 When the centurion heard *that,* he
went and told the commander, saying, "Take
care what you do, for this man is a Roman."

27 Then the commander came and said
to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?"

He said, "Yes."

28 The commander answered, "With a
large sum I obtained this citizenship."

And Paul said, "But I was born *a citizen.*"

29 Then immediately those who were
about to examine him withdrew from him;
and the commander was also afraid after
he found out that he was a Roman, and
because he had bound him.

The Sanhedrin Divided

30 The next day, because he wanted to
know for certain why he was accused by

22:9 [a]NU-Text omits *and were afraid.* **22:20** [a]NU-Text omits *to his death.*

the Jews, he released him from *his* bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

23 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." [2]And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. [3]Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, *you* whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"

[4]And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"

[5]Then Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, *'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'*"[a]

[6]But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"

[7]And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. [8]For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. [9]Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God."[a]

[10]Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring *him* into the barracks.

The Plot Against Paul

[11]But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

[12]And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. [13]Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. [14]They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. [15]Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow,[a] as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

[16]So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. [17]Then Paul called one of the centurions to *him* and said, "Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him." [18]So he took him and brought *him* to the commander and said, "Paul the prisoner called me to *him* and asked *me* to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you."

[19]Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?"

[20]And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. [21]But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you."

[22]So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded *him,* "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me."

Sent to Felix

[23]And he called for two centurions, saying, "Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; [24]and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring *him* safely to Felix the governor." [25]He wrote a letter in the following manner:

[26]Claudius Lysias,

To the most excellent governor Felix:

23:5 [a]Exodus 22:28 **23:9** [a]NU-Text omits last clause and reads *what if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?* **23:15** [a]NU-Text omits *tomorrow.*

Greetings.

27 This man was seized by the Jews
and was about to be killed by them.
Coming with the troops I rescued him,
having learned that he was a Roman.
28 And when I wanted to know the rea-
son they accused him, I brought him
before their council. 29 I found out that
he was accused concerning questions
of their law, but had nothing charged
against him deserving of death or
chains. 30 And when it was told me that
the Jews lay in wait for the man,[a] I sent
him immediately to you, and also com-
manded his accusers to state before
you the charges against him.

Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as they were com-
manded, took Paul and brought *him* by
night to Antipatris. 32 The next day they
left the horsemen to go on with him, and
returned to the barracks. 33 When they came
to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to
the governor, they also presented Paul to
him. 34 And when the governor had read *it,*
he asked what province he was from. And
when he understood that *he was* from Cilicia,
35 he said, "I will hear you when your accus-
ers also have come." And he commanded
him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium.

Accused of Sedition

24 Now after five days Ananias the high
priest came down with the elders
and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These
gave evidence to the governor against Paul.
2 And when he was called upon,
Tertullus began his accusation, saying:
"Seeing that through you we enjoy great
peace, and prosperity is being brought to
this nation by your foresight, 3 we accept *it*
always and in all places, most noble Felix,
with all thankfulness. 4 Nevertheless, not to
be tedious to you any further, I beg you to
hear, by your courtesy, a few words from
us. 5 For we have found this man a plague,
a creator of dissension among all the Jews
throughout the world, and a ringleader of
the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried
to profane the temple, and we seized him,[a]
and wanted to judge him according to our
law. 7 But the commander Lysias came by
and with great violence took *him* out of our
hands, 8 commanding his accusers to come
to you. By examining him yourself you
may ascertain all these things of which we
accuse him." 9 And the Jews also assented,[a]
maintaining that these things were so.

The Defense Before Felix

10 Then Paul, after the governor had nod-
ded to him to speak, answered: "Inasmuch as
I know that you have been for many years a
judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully
answer for myself, 11 because you may ascer-
tain that it is no more than twelve days since
I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12 And
they neither found me in the temple dis-
puting with anyone nor inciting the crowd,
either in the synagogues or in the city. 13 Nor
can they prove the things of which they now
accuse me. 14 But this I confess to you, that
according to the Way which they call a sect,
so I worship the God of my fathers, believing
all things which are written in the Law and
in the Prophets. 15 I have hope in God, which
they themselves also accept, that there will
be a resurrection of *the* dead,[a] both of *the*
just and *the* unjust. 16 This *being* so, I myself
always strive to have a conscience without
offense toward God and men.

17 "Now after many years I came to bring
alms and offerings to my nation, 18 in the
midst of which some Jews from Asia found
me purified in the temple, neither with a
mob nor with tumult. 19 They ought to have
been here before you to object if they had
anything against me. 20 Or else let those who
are *here* themselves say if they found any
wrongdoing[a] in me while I stood before the

23:30 [a]NU-Text reads *there would be a plot against the man.* **24:6** [a]NU-Text ends the sentence here and omits the rest of verse 6, all of verse 7, and the first clause of verse 8. **24:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *joined the attack.* **24:15** [a]NU-Text omits *of the dead.* **24:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *say what wrongdoing they found.*



council, [21]unless *it is* for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.'"

Felix Procrastinates

[22]But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of *the* Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case." [23]So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let *him* have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

[24]And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. [25]Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." [26]Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him.[a] Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

[27]But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.

Paul Appeals to Caesar

25 Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. [2]Then the high priest[a] and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, [3]asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while *they* lay in ambush along the road to kill him. [4]But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going *there* shortly. [5]"Therefore," he said, "let those who have authority among you go down with *me* and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him."

[6]And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought. [7]When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, [8]while he answered for himself, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all."

[9]But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?"

[10]So Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. [11]For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar."

[12]Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!"

Paul Before Agrippa

[13]And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. [14]When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, [15]about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me,* when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. [16]To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction[a] before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.' [17]Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. [18]When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, [19]but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. [20]And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. [21]But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."

24:26 [a]NU-Text omits *that he might release him.* **25:2** [a]NU-Text reads *chief priests.* **25:16** [a]NU-Text omits *to destruction,* although it is implied.

22Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself."

"Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

23So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in. 24And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. 25But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. 26I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. 27For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him."

Paul's Early Life

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself."

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: 2"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, 3especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

4"My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. 5They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. 8Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

9"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against *them*. 11And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities.

Paul Recounts His Conversion

12"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. 14And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is* hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now[a] send you, 18to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

Paul's Post-Conversion Life

19"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. 21For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill *me*. 22Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— 23that the Christ would suf-

26:17 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *now.*

fer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

Agrippa Parries Paul's Challenge

[24]Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

[25]But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. [26]For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. [27]King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

[28]Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

[29]And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

[30]When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; [31]and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."

[32]Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

The Voyage to Rome Begins

27 And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. [2]So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. [3]And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care. [4]When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter of* Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. [5]And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia. [6]There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.

[7]When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter of* Crete off Salmone. [8]Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city *of* Lasea.

Paul's Warning Ignored

[9]Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, [10]saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives." [11]Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. [12]And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and* winter *there*.

In the Tempest

[13]When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. [14]But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon.[a] [15]So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. [16]And running under *the shelter of* an island called Clauda,[a] we secured the skiff with difficulty. [17]When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis[a] *Sands,* they struck sail and so were driven. [18]And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship. [19]On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. [20]Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us,* all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

[21]But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. [22]And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the

27:14 [a]NU-Text reads *Euraquilon*. **27:16** [a]NU-Text reads *Cauda*.
27:17 [a]M-Text reads *Syrtes*.

ship. [23]For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, [24]saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' [25]Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. [26]However, we must run aground on a certain island."

[27]Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic *Sea,* about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. [28]And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. [29]Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. [30]And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, [31]Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." [32]Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

[33]And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. [34]Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." [35]And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. [36]Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. [37]And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. [38]So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

Shipwrecked on Malta

[39]When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. [40]And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. [41]But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

[42]And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. [43]But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, [44]and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

Paul's Ministry on Malta

28 Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. [2]And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. [3]But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. [4]So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live." [5]But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. [6]However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

[7]In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. [8]And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. [9]So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. [10]They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

Arrival at Rome

[11]After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the

island. 12And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. 13From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, 14where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. 15And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

16Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.

Paul's Ministry at Rome

17And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: "Men *and* brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, 18who, when they had examined me, wanted to let *me* go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. 19But when the Jews[a] spoke against *it,* I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. 20For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see *you* and speak with *you,* because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

21Then they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. 22But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere."

23So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at *his* lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. 24And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. 25So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our[a] fathers, 26saying,

'Go to this people and say:
"Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand;
And seeing you will see, and not perceive;
27 *For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them." [a]

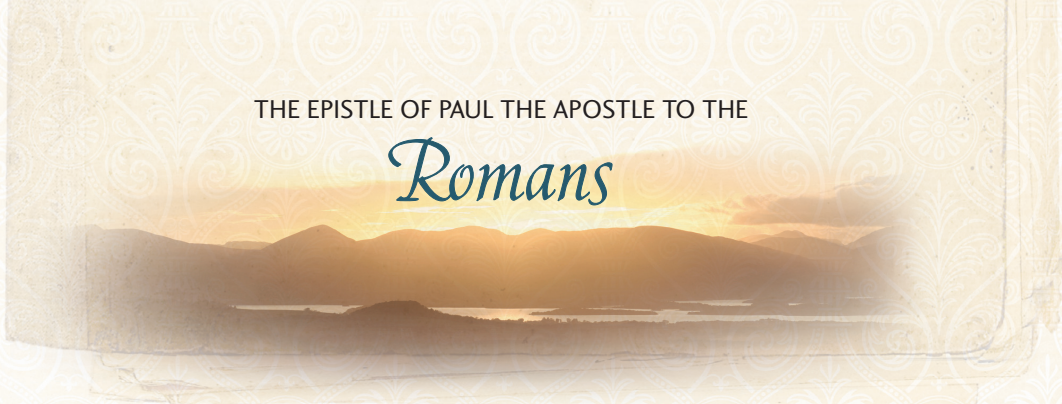
28"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" 29And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.[a]

30Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

28:19 [a]That is, the ruling authorities **28:25** [a]NU-Text reads *your.*
28:27 [a]Isaiah 6:9, 10 **28:29** [a]NU-Text omits this verse.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

Romans



Greeting

1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ,
called *to be* an apostle, separated to the
gospel of God [2]which He promised before
through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,
[3]concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who was born of the seed of David accord-
ing to the flesh, [4]*and* declared *to be* the Son
of God with power according to the Spirit
of holiness, by the resurrection from the
dead. [5]Through Him we have received grace
and apostleship for obedience to the faith
among all nations for His name, [6]among
whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

[7]To all who are in Rome, beloved of
God, called *to be* saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Desire to Visit Rome

[8]First, I thank my God through Jesus
Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken
of throughout the whole world. [9]For God is
my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in
the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing
I make mention of you always in my prayers,
[10]making request if, by some means, now at
last I may find a way in the will of God to
come to you. [11]For I long to see you, that
I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so
that you may be established— [12]that is,
that I may be encouraged together with you
by the mutual faith both of you and me.

[13]Now I do not want you to be unaware,
brethren, that I often planned to come to
you (but was hindered until now), that
I might have some fruit among you also,
just as among the other Gentiles. [14]I am a
debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians,
both to wise and to unwise. [15]So, as much
as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel
to you who are in Rome also.

The Just Live by Faith

[16]For I am not ashamed of the gospel of
Christ,[a] for it is the power of God to sal-
vation for everyone who believes, for the
Jew first and also for the Greek. [17]For in it
the righteousness of God is revealed from
faith to faith; as it is written, *"The just shall
live by faith."*[a]

God's Wrath on Unrighteousness

[18]For the wrath of God is revealed
from heaven against all ungodliness and
unrighteousness of men, who suppress the
truth in unrighteousness, [19]because what
may be known of God is manifest in them,
for God has shown *it* to them. [20]For since
the creation of the world His invisible *attri-
butes* are clearly seen, being understood by
the things that are made, *even* His eternal
power and Godhead, so that they are with-
out excuse, [21]because, although they knew
God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor
were thankful, but became futile in their
thoughts, and their foolish hearts were
darkened. [22]Professing to be wise, they
became fools, [23]and changed the glory of
the incorruptible God into an image made
like corruptible man—and birds and four-
footed animals and creeping things.

[24]Therefore God also gave them up to
uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to
dishonor their bodies among themselves,
[25]who exchanged the truth of God for the
lie, and worshiped and served the creature
rather than the Creator, who is blessed for-
ever. Amen.

[26]For this reason God gave them up to vile
passions. For even their women exchanged
the natural use for what is against nature.
[27]Likewise also the men, leaving the natural
use of the woman, burned in their lust for
one another, men with men committing what

1:16 [a]NU-Text omits *of Christ.* **1:17** [a]Habakkuk 2:4

is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

[28]And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; [29]being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality,[a] wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, [30]backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [31]undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving,[a] unmerciful; [32]who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

God's Righteous Judgment

2 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. [2]But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. [3]And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? [4]Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? [5]But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, [6]who *"will render to each one according to his deeds":*[a] [7]eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; [8]but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, [9]tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; [10]but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [11]For there is no partiality with God.

[12]For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law [13](for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; [14]for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, [15]who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*) [16]in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

The Jews Guilty as the Gentiles

[17]Indeed[a] you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, [18]and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, [19]and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, [20]an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. [21]You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? [22]You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? [23]You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? [24]For *"the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,"*[a] as it is written.

Circumcision of No Avail

[25]For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. [26]Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? [27]And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, *even* with *your* written *code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law? [28]For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; [29]but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the

1:29 [a]NU-Text omits *sexual immorality.* **1:31** [a]NU-Text omits *unforgiving.* **2:6** [a]Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12 **2:17** [a]NU-Text reads *But if.* **2:24** [a]Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:22

This Could Be the Dawning of that Day

A parade began at Calvary;
The saints of all the ages fill its ranks.
O'er the sands of time they're marching to their
King's great coronation,
And this could be the dawning of that day!
Nothing here holds their allegiance;
They're not bound by shackles forged of earthly gold.
Since that day they knelt at Calvary they've been
pilgrims ever wand'ring,
Just looking for a place to rest their souls.

Oh, this could be the dawning of that grand
and glorious day,
When the face of Jesus we behold!
Dreams and hopes of all the ages are waiting
His returning,
And this could be the dawning of that day!

All the saints are getting restless;
Oh, what glorious expectation fills each face!
Dreams and hopes of all the ages are awaiting
His returning,
And this could be the dawning of that day!

Oh, this could be the dawning of that grand
and glorious day,
When the face of Jesus we behold!
Dreams and hopes of all the ages are waiting
His returning,
And this could be the dawning of that day!

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

ROMANS 5:3, 5

We think about it most during a national crisis. It's then we hear people speculating about the end of the world and which events point to the close of time as we know it.

Bill and I have experienced several such crisis moments. We remember, for instance, the bombing of Hanoi and the escalation of the Vietnam War.

When I was in college, the whole country held its breath during the Cuban Missile Crisis, waiting to see whether nuclear weapons would be deployed (intentionally or by accident) in a moment of intense international pressure.

The Gulf War, because its modern, more destructive means of warfare could ignite the oilfields of the Middle East and blow us all to kingdom come, made us speculate about end-times prophecies. We could see how the battle of Armageddon with soldiers on horseback and hand-to-hand combat might actually occur in this war.

More than once in the last several decades, the bombing raids on Lebanon or the terrorist attacks in Syria, the Golan Heights, or Tel Aviv had us scurrying to Daniel and the Book of Revelation for details that might match those on the evening news.

Then the next thing we knew, the explosions from terrorist attacks were not somewhere else but in Oklahoma City, New York, or aboard an airliner on which someone we knew could have been scheduled to fly.

By the end of the twentieth century, the earth itself seemed to have become weary. Pollution and the irresponsible use of her resources had stretched this generous planet to its

limits. Like a body aging, the earth now inches its way toward the time when, like a spirit escaping the worn-out encasement that held it, those inhabitants with homes established elsewhere will fly away, leaving the artifact they once used to turn to dust and blow away. We can sense it. Soon, like a pod that holds a seed, the planet could explode—break open and disintegrate—having outlived its usefulness.

No wonder denial and despair are epidemic in our culture. For those who have invested everything in the disintegrating things of earth, these are desolate and desperate times.

But there is excitement in the air for the people of God. The promise we feel in our bones is like the thrill of the countdown for a launch to the moon! Every world event encourages a letting go of stuff and a laying hold of the hope that is within us. The darker the world gets, the brighter burns the hope.

The society of earth has come to "regard waiting as a form of impotence," as author Robin Meyers has phrased it in his book *Morning Sun on a White Piano*. "Do something," he points out, is always the theme of a desperate people. But for those who have "a home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," life is only "a trip, not a destination." We live, as Meyers puts it, knowing that hope is "the one disposition for which there is no alternative."

We have always been "pilgrims ever wandering, just looking for a place to rest our souls." Our home, our hiding place, has never been the edifices of earth, though while we are here, we have taken up temporary residence in them. No, the Lord Himself has been and will always be our safe hiding place, our rock to build a life upon. If the planets disintegrate, He alone will be our trustworthy shield.

As the psalmist said, "You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word. . . . Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope" (Ps. 119:114, 116). So instead of depression, our lives are filled with an exciting sense of urgency. In the place of despair, our hope burns brighter and will until the need for hope is replaced by the incredible reality of a new day dawning.



Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.

God's Judgment Defended

3 What advantage then has the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision?
2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.
3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?
4 Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written:

"That You may be justified in Your words,
And may overcome when You are judged."[a]

5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)
6 Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?
7 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?
8 And *why* not *say,* "Let us do evil that good may come"?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

All Have Sinned

9 What then? Are we better *than they?* Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.
10 As it is written:

"There is none righteous, no, not one;
11 *There is none who understands;*
There is none who seeks after God.
12 *They have all turned aside;*
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one."[a]
13 *"Their throat is an open tomb;*
With their tongues they have practiced deceit";[a]
"The poison of asps is under their lips";[b]
14 *"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."*[a]
15 *"Their feet are swift to shed blood;*
16 *Destruction and misery are in their ways;*
17 *And the way of peace they have not known."*[a]
18 *"There is no fear of God before their eyes."*[a]

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

God's Righteousness Through Faith

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all[a] who believe. For there is no difference;
23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
25 whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,
26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Boasting Excluded

27 Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.
28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.
29 Or *is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,
30 since *there is* one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.
31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Abraham Justified by Faith

4 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?[a]
2 For if Abraham was justified by

3:4 [a]Psalm 51:4 **3:12** [a]Psalms 14:1–3; 53:1–3; Ecclesiastes 7:20
3:13 [a]Psalm 5:9 [b]Psalm 140:3 **3:14** [a]Psalm 10:7 **3:17** [a]Isaiah 59:7, 8
3:18 [a]Psalm 36:1 **3:22** [a]NU-Text omits *and on all.* **4:1** [a]Or *Abraham our (fore)father according to the flesh has found?*

works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. [3]For what does the Scripture say? *"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*[a] [4]Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

David Celebrates the Same Truth

[5]But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, [6]just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

[7] *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds*
are forgiven,
And whose sins are covered;
[8] *Blessed is the man to whom the* LORD
shall not impute sin."[a]

Abraham Justified Before Circumcision

[9]*Does* this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only,* or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. [10]How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. [11]And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, [12]and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.

The Promise Granted Through Faith

[13]For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. [14]For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, [15]because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

[16]Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to

4:3 [a]Genesis 15:6 **4:8** [a]Psalm 32:1, 2



JEFF ALLEN • Homecoming Artist, Comedian

What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. | ROMANS 6:21

That is a great question! As a recovering drug addict and alcoholic, this question jumped out at me! All those parties and nights in the clubs in the end had brought me to the bottom of my life, total despair. In other words, a rotten tree produces rotten fruit. Yet amazingly, years later God is using those things that I am now ashamed of to glorify Himself, proving to me, at least, that the Author of life can and will take the deadest of trees, water it with His Spirit, and produce a glorifying harvest. Praise be to God!

those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all [17](as it is written, *"I have made you a father of many nations"*[a]) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; [18]who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, *"So shall your descendants be."*[a] [19]And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. [20]He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, [21]and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. [22]And therefore *"it was accounted to him for righteousness."*[a]

[23]Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, [24]but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, [25]who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Faith Triumphs in Trouble

5 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have[a] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [2]through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3]And not only *that,* but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; [4]and perseverance, character; and character, hope. [5]Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Christ in Our Place

[6]For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [7]For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. [8]But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [9]Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. [10]For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. [11]And not only *that,* but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

[12]Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— [13](For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. [14]Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. [15]But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. [16]And the gift *is* not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one *offense resulted* in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offenses *resulted* in justification. [17]For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

[18]Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment came* to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. [19]For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

[20]Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, [21]so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

4:17 [a]Genesis 17:5 **4:18** [a]Genesis 15:5 **4:22** [a]Genesis 15:6
5:1 [a]Another ancient reading is, *let us have peace.*

Because He Lives

God sent His Son; they called Him Jesus.
He came to love, heal and forgive—
He lived and died to buy my pardon;
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow;
Because He lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future,
Life is worth the living just because He lives.

How sweet to hold our newborn baby
And feel the pride and joy he gives;
But greater still the calm assurance
This child can face uncertain days because He lives.

And then one day I'll cross death's river;
I'll fight life's final war with pain—
And then as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He reigns.

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living just because He lives.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

ROMANS 6:8–10

Bill and I were married and started our family in the sixties. Suzanne was born in 1964; Amy came along in 1969. It was a turbulent decade. Racial tensions had torn the country apart. Civil rights activists had suffered and some had been killed as our country was forced to look at the gaping chasm between the celebrated American promise of freedom and the reality for many of its citizens. The Vietnam Conflict (we refused to call it a war) would drag on through three administrations and eighteen years, taking fifty-seven thousand American lives. New "designer drugs" concocted in laboratories began to surface. The hippy generation felt increasingly estranged from society.

In this climate, Bill and I were writing songs about what we saw as real and lasting answers to the turmoil of the human spirit, about truths that had preceded us and would be around long after we were gone. Then, in the fall of 1969, several things happened to make us test the reality of our convictions: Bill's sister, Mary Ann, went though a divorce that was devastating to her and to our whole family because it was the first time divorce had touched us so closely. About this time we realized we were expecting another baby. Suzanne was four and Amy was three months old, and although we had always planned to have three, we were not expecting to have a baby so soon. And Bill contracted mononucleosis, which left him exhausted and depressed.

Then a person close to us, whom we loved and in whom we had invested a great deal in terms of time and energy, asked us to financially support a project we felt was unwise. When we turned him down, he stormed through our home and shouted at Bill, "You're

just a phony! You wouldn't believe this Jesus stuff if you weren't making your living at it!" He slammed the door and walked out of our lives. Already depleted and discouraged by the drain on his energies due to the mononucleosis and filled with anxiety by the world situation, Bill was thrown into deep depression and a time of self-analysis.

Bill and I would talk about all the circumstances of the world, and about this new discouragement, and wound up saying, "If this world is like this now, what will it be in fifteen or sixteen years for our baby? What will this child face?" We were filled with fear and uncertainty.

One day a dear friend, Sid Guillen, came by the house. Knowing that Bill was feeling defeated, Sid had asked God to show him what to do, and it was obvious that he had heard from God when he walked into our family room. "This is not just discouragement, Bill," he said, "this is an imposition of Satan. I would like to anoint you with oil as the Scripture commands and rebuke this spirit of fear in the name of Jesus." He proceeded to do just that, and then he gave us both a big hug and left. Gradually, Bill felt better. Physically and spiritually he saw a growing ray of light in the darkness. Yet we worried about the world situation and about the baby I was carrying.

That New Year's Eve, I lay on the couch looking at a large piece of art my mother had painted in oils and given to us for Christmas. It depicted a farmer's hand holding a mound of black, rich soil from which sprouted a tiny seedling that he obviously intended to plant. As I looked at Mother's painting, it seemed that God spoke to me in the silence: *Look at how fragile that seedling is. Think of all that could happen to it: flood, drought, pests, disease. But that seedling is going to make it. It will grow up straight and strong because of the tenderness of the farmer's hand. He knows the threats; he's committed to that plant, and he will take good care of it. One day it will bear a crop. It will not only live, it will thrive.*

That summer, on July 19, I gave birth to a perfect, precious baby boy. After the winter of our discontent, this child seemed like a blade of grass pushing up through pavement. We hadn't written a song for what seemed like a very long time, but as that season of our lives ended, we would soon put words and music to what God was teaching us: it isn't because the world is stable that we have the courage to live our lives or start marriages or have children. The world has never been stable. Jesus Himself was born into the cruelest and most unstable of worlds. No, we have babies and keep trusting and risk living because the Resurrection is true! The Resurrection was not just a onetime event in history; it is a principle built into the very fabric of our beings, a fact reverberating from every cell of creation: Life wins! Life wins!

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

6 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him,* that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading* to *more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for holiness.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. 22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Freed from the Law

7 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? 2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then if, while *her* husband lives, she

For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
ROMANS 6:23

Thank you, Lord, that you didn't leave it with "the wages of sin is death." You could have, but you didn't. You were hopelessly in love with us, so you paid a great price to add the second part: "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. 4Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. 5For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 6But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

Sin's Advantage in the Law

7What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, *"You shall not covet."*[a] 8But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of* evil desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead. 9I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. 10And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. 11For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me.* 12Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Law Cannot Save from Sin

13Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. 14For we know that the law is

7:7 [a]Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. | ROMANS 7:25

I often hear Christians speak of their Christian experience as a "Romans 7" experience. I am sure that they are referring to the indwelling corruption that continually issues from the natural man. Many Christians are frustrated because they are not experiencing the victory over the sin in their lives that they believe is available in Christ. "How can I get out of Romans 7 and live in Romans 8?" That is the dilemma many face as they pray for deliverance from their natural tendencies to sin. The answer is simple. The way out of Romans 7 into Romans 8 is by saying, "Thank You!" "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" was the transition between the experience of chapter 7 and chapter 8. We are often so caught up in saying "Please," we forget to say "Thank You." We beg God to grant us what He has already granted us. If we would take His victory by faith and thank Him for it, we would be delivered from the bondage described in Romans 7 and live in the abundance described in Romans 8. It is not difficult to say, "Thank You!"

spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. [15]For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. [16]If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. [17]But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. [18]For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. [19]For the good that I will *to do,* I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do,* that I practice. [20]Now if I do what I will not *to do,* it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

[21]I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. [22]For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. [23]But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. [24]O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? [25]I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Free from Indwelling Sin

8 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[a] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. [2]For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. [3]For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, [4]that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [5]For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. [6]For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. [7]Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. [8]So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

[9]But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. [10]And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. [11]But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Sonship Through the Spirit

[12]Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [13]For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14]For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. [15]For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." [16]The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17]and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him,* that we may also be glorified together.

Hail Son of God, Saviour of Men, thy Name Shall be the copious matter of my Song Henceforth, and never shall my Harp thy praise Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.

JOHN MILTON

From Suffering to Glory

[18]For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. [19]For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. [20]For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; [21]because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. [22]For we know that

8:1 [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

You did not receive the spirit
of bondage again to fear,
but you received the Spirit
of adoption by whom
we cry out, "Abba, Father."
ROMANS 8:15

It is like us to want what we can see, what we already know, over a promised "something better," but unknown. We would choose being a foster child if it's the best we've ever known. It beats being an orphan left alone. It beats living in an abusive home.

But God is offering us adoption. Better than that, He's offering to reveal to us that our loving adoptive parent is our real Father and our sweet big adopted sibling is really—can you believe it?—our blood brother who went to the end of the universe to find us and bring us home again. This is no fairy tale. Trust it! This is not a hope that will end up disappointing us again. This is real. Can't you see how much we resemble this family? We have—He gave us—the same characteristics! We belong!



the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. [23]Not only *that,* but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. [24]For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? [25]But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

[26]Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us[a] with groanings which cannot be uttered. [27]Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is,* because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

[28]And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. [29]For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. [30]Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

God's Everlasting Love

[31]What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? [32]He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? [33]Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. [34]Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. [35]Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? [36]As it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the
slaughter."[a]

8:26 [a]NU-Text omits *for us.* **8:36** [a]Psalm 44:22

37 Yet in all these things we are more than
conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For
I am persuaded that neither death nor life,
nor angels nor principalities nor powers,
nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor
height nor depth, nor any other created
thing, shall be able to separate us from the
love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Israel's Rejection of Christ

9 I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying,
my conscience also bearing me witness
in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sor-
row and continual grief in my heart. 3 For
I could wish that I myself were accursed
from Christ for my brethren, my coun-
trymen[a] according to the flesh, 4 who are
Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption,
the glory, the covenants, the giving of the
law, the service *of God,* and the promises;
5 of whom *are* the fathers and from whom,
according to the flesh, Christ *came,* who is
over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

Israel's Rejection and God's Purpose

6 But it is not that the word of God has
taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel
who *are* of Israel, 7 nor *are they* all children
because they are the seed of Abraham; but,
"In Isaac your seed shall be called."[a] 8 That is,
those who *are* the children of the flesh, these
are not the children of God; but the children
of the promise are counted as the seed. 9 For
this *is* the word of promise: *"At this time I will
come and Sarah shall have a son."*[a]

10 And not only *this,* but when Rebecca
also had conceived by one man, *even* by our
father Isaac 11 (for *the children* not yet being
born, nor having done any good or evil, that
the purpose of God according to election
might stand, not of works but of Him who
calls), 12 it was said to her, *"The older shall
serve the younger."*[a] 13 As it is written, *"Jacob
I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*[a]

Israel's Rejection and God's Justice

14 What shall we say then? *Is there*
unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!
15 For He says to Moses, *"I will have mercy
on whomever I will have mercy, and I will
have compassion on whomever I will have*

9:3 [a]Or *relatives* **9:7** [a]Genesis 21:12 **9:9** [a]Genesis 18:10, 14
9:12 [a]Genesis 25:23 **9:13** [a]Malachi 1:2, 3

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

So often we rebuke Satan when anything different or difficult happens—and we should. But Satan is not the Master. The very things that seem hard or negative in life God will use; these things are His tools to accomplish something wonderful and eternal in us. Everything of earth, including our bodies, is so transient. But while we have these transient bodies and circumstances, God is carving away with them a lasting, glorious masterpiece. Illness, loss, disappointment, human betrayal, reversals, humiliation—whatever may come—God will use and is using to refine us, to make us a thing of beauty, "lacking nothing" (James 1:4).

compassion."[a] [16]So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. [17]For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, *"For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."*[a] [18]Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

[19]You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" [20]But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, "Why have you made me like this?" [21]Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

[22]*What* if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, [23]and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, [24]even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

[25]As He says also in Hosea:

"I will call them My people, who were not My people,
And her beloved, who was not beloved."[a]
[26] *"And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,*
'You are not My people,'
There they shall be called sons of the living God."[a]

[27]Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel:[a]

"Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
The remnant will be saved.
[28] *For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness,*
Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."[a]

9:15 [a]Exodus 33:19 **9:17** [a]Exodus 9:16 **9:25** [a]Hosea 2:23
9:26 [a]Hosea 1:10 **9:27** [a]Isaiah 10:22, 23 **9:28** [a]NU-Text reads *For the LORD will finish the work and cut it short upon the earth.*



FAYE SPEER • Homecoming Artist, Formerly with *The Speers*

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. | ROMANS 8:26, 27

Prayer is a powerful subject. Prayer isn't a one-way dialog. I think that we have a tendency to make our wishes known and don't expect to get an answer, or at least not the one we wanted. When it comes right down to it, we really don't know how to pray. What if the Lord answered all of the prayers we ever prayed? God loves us so much that He sometimes gives us what we need and not what we want. Prayer is a process that reminds us of who God is and who we are. I believe that there is great power in prayer, but I also believe we can't tell God what to do and when to do it. There is a big difference between faith and presumption. There is a difference between believing He is the almighty God and demanding He be our divine servant. God knows that with our limited vision we don't even know

[29]And as Isaiah said before:

"Unless the LORD of Sabaoth[a] had left
us a seed,
We would have become like Sodom,
And we would have been made like
Gomorrah."[b]

Present Condition of Israel

[30]What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; [31]but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.[a] [32]Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law.[a] For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. [33]As it is written:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone
and rock of offense,
And whoever believes on Him will not
be put to shame."[a]

Israel Needs the Gospel

10 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel[a] is that they may be saved. [2]For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. [3]For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. [4]For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

[5]For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, *"The man who does those things shall live by them."*[a] [6]But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, *"Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"*[a] (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) [7]or, *" 'Who will descend into the abyss?'"*[a] (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). [8]But what does it

9:29 [a]Literally, in Hebrew, *Hosts* [b]Isaiah 1:9 **9:31** [a]NU-Text omits *of righteousness*. **9:32** [a]NU-Text reads *by works*. **9:33** [a]Isaiah 8:14; 28:16 **10:1** [a]NU-Text reads *them*. **10:5** [a]Leviticus 18:5 **10:6** [a]Deuteronomy 30:12 **10:7** [a]Deuteronomy 30:13

what we should pray for. We may be praying for something right now that God knows would not be best for us. When we give our prayers to Him, we trust Him to answer with His holy judgment.

I think that the reason I like Romans 8 so much is that so much of the time I am at a loss to know how to pray. *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God*. Take time to listen.

I have always liked the statement that the reason that the angels took the news of Christ's birth to the shepherds was that they were quiet and could hear. We, too, when we pray should take time to be still and know that He is God. Prayer is our privilege and our right as Christians. We can talk to God as a friend. I used to think that to pray you had to kneel down by your bed, but I have found that I can pray no matter what I'm doing. Prayer doesn't have to be about big things; He is interested in small things, too. Anything that concerns us concerns Him, too. Let's remember to thank Him, too, for answers seen and unseen.

say? *"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"*[a] (that is, the word of faith which we preach): [9]that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. [10]For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. [11]For the Scripture says, *"Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."*[a] [12]For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. [13]For *"whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*[a]

Israel Rejects the Gospel

[14]How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? [15]And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

"How beautiful are the feet of those
who preach the gospel of peace,[a]
Who bring glad tidings of good things!"[b]

[16]But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, *"LORD, who has believed our report?"*[a] [17]So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

[18]But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

"Their sound has gone out to all the
earth,
And their words to the ends of the
world."[a]

[19]But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says:

"I will provoke you to jealousy by those
who are not a nation,
I will move you to anger by a foolish
nation."[a]

10:8 [a]Deuteronomy 30:14 **10:11** [a]Isaiah 28:16 **10:13** [a]Joel 2:32
10:15 [a]NU-Text omits *preach the gospel of peace, Who.* [b]Isaiah 52:7; Nahum 1:15 **10:16** [a]Isaiah 53:1 **10:18** [a]Psalm 19:4 **10:19** [a]Deuteronomy 32:21



GERALD WOLFE • Homecoming Artist, *Greater Vision*

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. | ROMANS 8:26

I think every one of us sometimes has hurts that are too deep to even admit to our closest friend. Sometimes, we struggle with things that we are certain those around us wouldn't understand. In those times, it's hard to put our feelings together into words to pray. The good news of Romans 8:26 is that in those times of utter helplessness—when we can't express ourselves to God—the Holy Spirit, Himself, takes the cry of our heart directly before the throne of God, and speaks directly to God on our behalf. The Holy Spirit uses a form of communication that can only be understood by God. Those "groanings" express our innermost feelings . . . the feelings of the soul. These "groanings" can't be put into human words, but thankfully, the One who created us is listening—and He understands—perfectly.

20 But Isaiah is very bold and says:

"I was found by those who did not
seek Me;
I was made manifest to those who
did not ask for Me."[a]

21 But to Israel he says:

"All day long I have stretched out My
hands
To a disobedient and contrary people."[a]

Israel's Rejection Not Total

11 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 *"LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"*?[a] 4 But what does the divine response say to him? *"I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."*[a] 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.[a] But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. 8 Just as it is written:

"God has given them a spirit of stupor,
Eyes that they should not see
And ears that they should not hear,
To this very day."[a]

9 And David says:

"Let their table become a snare and
a trap,
A stumbling block and a recompense
to them.
10 *Let their eyes be darkened, so that*
they do not see,
And bow down their back always."[a]

Israel's Rejection Not Final

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their fall *is* riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are* my flesh and save some of them. 15 For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* but life from the dead?

16 For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy;* and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. 17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well *said.* Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be

10:20 [a]Isaiah 65:1 **10:21** [a]Isaiah 65:2 **11:3** [a]1 Kings 19:10, 14
11:4 [a]1 Kings 19:18 **11:6** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.
11:8 [a]Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10 **11:10** [a]Psalm 69:22, 23



haughty, but fear. 21For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness,[a] if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural *branches,* be grafted into their own olive tree?

25For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26And so all Israel will be saved,[a] as it is written:

"The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
And He will turn away ungodliness
from Jacob;
27 *For this is My covenant with them,*
When I take away their sins."[a]

28Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. 30For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

33Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

34 *"For who has known the mind of the*
LORD?
Or who has become His counselor?"[a]
35 *"Or who has first given to Him*
And it shall be repaid to him?"[a]

36For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

11:22 [a]NU-Text adds *of God.* **11:26** [a]Or *delivered* **11:27** [a]Isaiah 59:20, 21 **11:34** [a]Isaiah 40:13; Jeremiah 23:18 **11:35** [a]Job 41:11



GERALD WOLFE • Homecoming Artist, *Greater Vision*

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

Whenever someone asks me to sign a Bible after a concert, I always include Romans 12:2 under my signature. Not only is it a powerful verse, but I really think it speaks to something that more and more Christians seem to be struggling with these days.

Understanding the culture that surrounds us is important to personal evangelism, but conforming to that culture can have negative spiritual consequences. The apostle Paul was able to relate to the different cultures he ministered in: he was a Jew, a Greek, and a Roman citizen. Though he could relate, the focus of his ministry remained clear: Jesus Christ. Our challenge

Living Sacrifices to God

12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Serve God with Spiritual Gifts

3For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them:* if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; 7or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The height of devotion is reached when reverence and contemplation produce passionate worship, which in turn breaks forth in thanksgiving and praise in word and song.

R. KENT HUGHES

Behave Like a Christian

9*Let* love *be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10*Be* kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

14Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

in today's ever-changing culture is to understand it without accepting or conforming to the things about it that are contrary to who we are in Christ. We should live confidently, knowing we have, living inside us as believers, the answer to this world's woes. He is the constant in an inconsistent culture. He is the Truth in a society full of deception and lies. We are called to shine the Light into a darkening world!

Romans 12:2 instructs us to constantly renew our minds so that we may become more and more like Christ. We can do that by studying His Word, praying, and applying the truth of the Word to our daily lives. When we do that, we won't conform to the world's ever-changing idea of what is right, but rather the world will see Christ in us. When that happens, Christ in us will draw people to Himself, and slowly but surely, the world around us can be conformed to His image. That is "the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

16 Be of the same mind toward one another.
Do not set your mind on high things, but
associate with the humble. Do not be wise
in your own opinion.
17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard
for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it
is possible, as much as depends on you, live
peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not
avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to
wrath; for it is written, *"Vengeance is Mine,
I will repay,"*[a] says the Lord. 20 Therefore

*"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of
fire on his head."*[a]

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but over-
come evil with good.

Submit to Government

13 Let every soul be subject to the
governing authorities. For there is
no authority except from God, and the
authorities that exist are appointed by God.
2 Therefore whoever resists the authority
resists the ordinance of God, and those who
resist will bring judgment on themselves.
3 For rulers are not a terror to good works,
but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of
the authority? Do what is good, and you will
have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's

12:19 [a]Deuteronomy 32:35 **12:20** [a]Proverbs 25:21, 22



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. | ROMANS 12:10, 11

There were about twenty young families, all filled with the spirit of adventure, living on that high Colorado plateau, altitude over 9,000 feet. They were all friends and were helping one another survive with little more than high hopes and hard work. They had all taken advantage of the Homestead Act. The men had built the homes, most of them log cabins. My dad carried the mail, my aunt and uncle ran the little grocery, and a friend taught school in a one-room schoolhouse. Entertainment was playing horseshoe and card games, having square dances and ice cream socials, the ice cream being made with blocks of ice cut from some high mountain lake. In the summer the men went out and rounded up wild ponies and we had our own rodeos.

I remember looking out the window of the log cabin at night to see coyotes silhouetted against the moonlit sky and hear their lonely howls.

Nothing much grew out there, except grain for feeding cattle.

Winters were long and hard. The thing that made it bearable, even fun, was the spirit of adventure, the spirit of the frontier in all the people. Everybody helped everybody. They all helped raise one another's children.

minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil. [5]Therefore *you* must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. [6]For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. [7]Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes *are due,* customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Love Your Neighbor

[8]Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. [9]For the commandments, *"You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness,"*[a] *"You shall not covet,"*[b] and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*[c] [10]Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

Put on Christ

[11]And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep;

13:9 [a]NU-Text omits *"You shall not bear false witness."* [b]Exodus 20:13–15, 17; Deuteronomy 5:17–19, 21 [c]Leviticus 19:18

No amount of work was too much if it meant a good joke or a surprise on somebody.

For a long time we did not even have a radio. I remember when the first one came in the mail. The nights were long and cold with only kerosene lamps for light and a potbellied stove for heat, and there was no entertainment. My mother used to be a schoolteacher, so it came natural to her to read to us in the long evenings. With my brother a young cowboy, and Dad a true frontiersman, you can bet she didn't read us *Little Women* or any other sissy tale. She read us Zane Grey's western novels. I probably heard them all, growing up. Dad had an old army blanket, made of rough wool and khaki colored. I'd pull it in behind the potbellied stove and wrap up in it and lie between the stove and the wall as Mom read those tales to the three of us.

We never had Bible reading or prayer, and I always regretted it, but now I see just how truly devotional that whole lifestyle really was.

It had nothing to do with the story. The security and love and warmth of the moment were doing the teaching. We were absorbing a sense of the magnitude of nature, the untamed glory of the mountains was becoming part of our spirits, and we were learning through the hard life a respect for people and for any living thing. Life was destructible, therefore precious. No one abused anyone else in that high valley.

Yes, it was devotional . . . not in words, but in meaning. I would happily wish just such an upbringing on any modern child—up to and including the "Zane Grey Devotional Hours."

for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. [12]The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. [13]Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. [14]But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

The Law of Liberty

14 Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things. [2]For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables. [3]Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. [4]Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

[5]One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike.* Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. [6]He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord;[a] and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it.* He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. [7]For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. [8]For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. [9]For to this end Christ died and rose[a] and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. [10]But why do you judge

14:6 [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this sentence. **14:9** [a]NU-Text omits *and rose.*



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. | ROMANS 12:21

I recently talked with a young man whose life, through surrounding circumstances, has evolved into a situation that is affecting both his personal and professional lives. As I listened while he shared his feelings with me, I realized that a root of bitterness had already sprung up and had begun to grow. I wanted so badly to make him see that bitterness deals misery and usually a crippling blow to the one who harbors it. After bitterness is firmly planted within, it's like a strong underlying current that pulls us under when we lose our grip. Many times we feel that we have been mistreated so badly that our bitterness is justified, and rightly so in many instances. As we talk about our situation and rehearse it again and again in our minds, it becomes a flaming fire that consumes us. It robs us of our peace, our contentment and joy, and alters our capability of functioning correctly. The person who continually harbors bitterness will eventually destroy himself or herself, while the object of the bitterness goes unscathed.

your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.[a]
11For it is written:

"As I live, says the LORD,
Every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall confess to God."[a]

12So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. 13Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way.

The Law of Love

14I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your* food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. 16Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; 17for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18For he who serves Christ in these things[a] *is* acceptable to God and approved by men.

19Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another. 20Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it is* evil for the man who eats with offense. 21*It is* good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor *do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.[a]
22Do you have faith?[a] Have *it* to yourself

14:10 [a]NU-Text reads *of God.* **14:11** [a]Isaiah 45:23 **14:18** [a]NU-Text reads *this.* **14:21** [a]NU-Text omits *or is offended or is made weak.*

During one of our ladies' seminars one of the women shared how a particular scripture passage had been her source and guideline during a very difficult time in her life: Hebrews12:15, "Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled." The lady shared that after she and her husband had finished raising their family and had gotten adjusted to the empty nest, heading toward retirement years, unexpectedly, their whole life was interrupted and changed. They had to assume the responsibility for caring for a disturbed grandchild. The lady became resentful. Through God's Word, grace, and strength, she did not allow the root of bitterness to spring up. She felt it, but she knew how tragic the results would be for her and her family. She resisted those bitter feelings. She and her husband still have the child, and it's still difficult for them, but you could see the joy of the Lord in her as she shared.

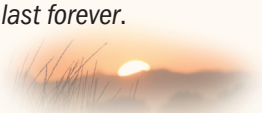
Every day we are faced with situations that create either positive or negative feelings within us, but we can take control. With God's help, we can prevent letting minor resentments build a wall of bitterness in our lives. We can refuse to let Satan sabotage our peace and joy. Instead, we can remember that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh. 8:10), and choose joy over bitterness.

Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

ROMANS 13:11–14

How much of my day is spent "making provision for the flesh"? What does that mean? It must mean the part of us that has no eternity in it—that part that is counter to the things that would soar, those earthbound passions that in the end will be destroyed and, if indulged, would destroy us: getting ahead without regard for others, indulging passions that are against God's laws of harmony, wasting time on selfish nonsense that degrades the mind, discourages the spirit, destroys relationships. "Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" must be a sister verse to Proverbs 4:23, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." We spew out what we take in. We focus our lives on the focus of our hearts.

Lord, while I am providing for the necessities of life, keep my focus on the provisions that last forever.



before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. [23]But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does* not *eat* from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.[a]

Bearing Others' Burdens

15 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. [2]Let each of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, leading to edification. [3]For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, *"The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."*[a] [4]For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. [5]Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, [6]that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: "For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name."

ROMANS 15:9

Glorify God Together

[7]Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us,[a] to the glory of God. [8]Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, [9]and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written:

"For this reason I will confess to You
among the Gentiles,
And sing to Your name."[a]

[10]And again he says:

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!"[a]

14:22 [a]NU-Text reads *The faith which you have—have.* **14:23** [a]M-Text puts Romans 16:25–27 here. **15:3** [a]Psalm 69:9 **15:7** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *you.* **15:9** [a]2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49 **15:10** [a]Deuteronomy 32:43

[11]And again:

"Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!
Laud Him, all you peoples!"[a]

[12]And again, Isaiah says:

"There shall be a root of Jesse;
And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,
In Him the Gentiles shall hope."[a]

[13]Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

From Jerusalem to Illyricum

[14]Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.[a] [15]Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, [16]that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. [17]Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things *which pertain* to God. [18]For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient— [19]in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. [20]And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, [21]but as it is written:

"To whom He was not announced, they shall see;
And those who have not heard shall understand."[a]

Plan to Visit Rome

[22]For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. [23]But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, [24]whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you.[a] For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company* for a while. [25]But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. [26]For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. [27]It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. [28]Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. [29]But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel[a] of Christ.

[30]Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, [31]that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, [32]that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. [33]Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Sister Phoebe Commended

16 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, [2]that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

Greeting Roman Saints

[3]Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, [4]who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. [5]Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house.

Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia[a] to Christ. [6]Greet Mary, who labored much for us. [7]Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen

15:11 [a]Psalm 117:1 **15:12** [a]Isaiah 11:10 **15:14** [a]M-Text reads *others.*
15:21 [a]Isaiah 52:15 **15:24** [a]NU-Text omits *I shall come to you* (and joins *Spain* with the next sentence). **15:29** [a]NU-Text omits *of the gospel.*
16:5 [a]NU-Text reads *Asia.*

Worship is not the mumbling of prayers or the mouthing of hymns with little thought and less heart; we celebrate God when we join together earnestly in prayer and intensely in song.

RONALD ALLEN

and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

[8]Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. [9]Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. [10]Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus. [11]Greet Herodion, my countryman.[a] Greet those who are of the *household* of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

[12]Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. [13]Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. [14]Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. [15]Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

[16]Greet one another with a holy kiss. The[a] churches of Christ greet you.

Avoid Divisive Persons

[17]Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. [18]For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus[a] Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. [19]For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. [20]And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

16:11 [a]Or *relative* **16:16** [a]NU-Text reads *All the churches*. **16:18** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Jesus*.



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. | ROMANS 14:4

God always deals with us as and where we are so that He might bring us to the place He desires us to be. We are all different. The way the Lord deals with me may not be the same way the Lord deals with you. It would be wrong for me to try and get you to conform to my life. My light is different from your light. Paul's argument was very powerful. He claimed that he had no right judging the servant of another for doing what his master allowed him to do. I must answer to my Master; you must answer to your Master. My Master may forbid me to do something that He allows you to do. Our accountability is unto the Lord. We would do well to make sure we are pleasing our own Master and not worry about others.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

Greetings from Paul's Friends

[21]Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.

[22]I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, greet you in the Lord.

[23]Gaius, my host and *the host* of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. [24]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.[a]

Benediction

[25]Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began [26]but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— [27]to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.[a]

16:24 [a]NU-Text omits this verse. **16:27** [a]M-Text puts Romans 16:25–27 after Romans 14:23.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

Corinthians



Greeting

1 Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,

2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Gifts at Corinth

4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, 5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, *that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God *is* faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sectarianism Is Sin

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household,* that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

Christ the Power and Wisdom of God

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written:

> *"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,*
> *And bring to nothing the*
> *understanding of the prudent."*[a]

20 Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks[a] foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Glory Only in the Lord

26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called.* 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God

1:19 [a]Isaiah 29:14 **1:23** [a]NU-Text reads *Gentiles.*

has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;
28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,
29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.
30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—
31 that, as it is written, *"He who glories, let him glory in the* LORD*."*[a]

Christ Crucified

2 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony[a] of God.
2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.
4 And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human[a] wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Spiritual Wisdom

6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.
7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory,
8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
9 But as it is written:

> *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,*
> *Nor have entered into the heart of man*
> *The things which God has prepared*
> *for those who love Him."*[a]

10 But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.
11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.
12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.
13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy[a] Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them,* because they are spiritually discerned.
15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one.
16 For *"who has known the mind of the* LORD *that he may instruct Him?"*[a] But we have the mind of Christ.

Sectarianism Is Carnal

3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.
2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it,* and even now you are still not able;
3 for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men?
4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I *am* of Apollos," are you not carnal?

Watering, Working, Warning

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?
6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.
7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.
8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.
9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building.
10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.
11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,
13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and

1:31 [a]Jeremiah 9:24 **2:1** [a]NU-Text reads *mystery.* **2:4** [a]NU-Text omits *human.* **2:9** [a]Isaiah 64:4 **2:13** [a]NU-Text omits *Holy.* **2:16** [a]Isaiah 40:13

the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. 15If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

16Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

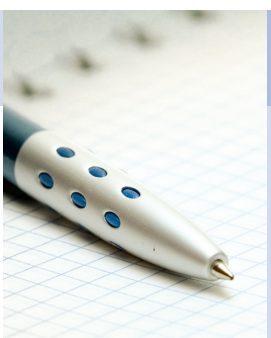
Avoid Worldly Wisdom

18Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, *"He catches the wise in their own craftiness"*;[a] 20and again, *"The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."*[a] 21Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: 22whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. 23And you *are* Christ's, and Christ *is* God's.

Stewards of the Mysteries of God

4 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 3But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court.[a] In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. 5Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both

3:19 [a]Job 5:13 **3:20** [a]Psalm 94:11 **4:3** [a]Literally *day*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. | 1 CORINTHIANS 2:4, 5

The danger of relying on human reasoning in things spiritual is that the faith of those who hear us will be standing in the strength of the last argument they have heard. Someone will surely come along with a more convincing argument and then their faith will be supported by the strength of that argument. The apostle Paul refused to try and persuade people with man's wisdom. He had an earnest desire that the faith of Christians stands in the power of the Lord and not in the strength of some persuasive words. I have applied this principle in a special way in ministering to my children. So often I have been tempted to give them some assurance of their salvation by pointing them back to some experience or event. It would be easy to do, but I do not want their faith to be established on something so unstable. My wife and I have refused to give them assurance on that basis; we have prayed that they would get their assurance from the Lord Himself. Then they will stand in the power of the Lord.

bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

Fools for Christ's Sake

6Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7For who makes you differ *from another?* And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it,* why do you boast as if you had not received *it?*

8You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you! 9For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored! 11To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. 12And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

Paul's Paternal Care

14I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you.* 15For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do* not *have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16Therefore I urge you, imitate me. 17For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

18Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. 19But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. 20For the kingdom of God *is* not in word but in power. 21What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Immorality Defiles the Church

5 It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named[a] among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! 2And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. 4In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.[a]

6Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.[a] 8Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

Immorality Must Be Judged

9I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

5:1 [a]NU-Text omits *named.* **5:5** [a]NU-Text omits *Jesus.* **5:7** [a]NU-Text omits *for us.*

12For what *have* I *to do* with judging
those also who are outside? Do you not
judge those who are inside? 13But those
who are outside God judges. Therefore *"put
away from yourselves the evil person."*[a]

Do Not Sue the Brethren

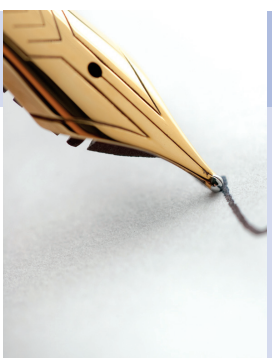
6 Dare any of you, having a matter against
another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 2Do you
not know that the saints will judge the
world? And if the world will be judged by
you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3Do you not know that we shall
judge angels? How much more, things that
pertain to this life? 4If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this
life, do you appoint those who are least
esteemed by the church to judge? 5I say
this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not
a wise man among you, not even one, who
will be able to judge between his brethren?
6But brother goes to law against brother,
and that before unbelievers!

7Now therefore, it is already an utter
failure for you that you go to law against
one another. Why do you not rather accept
wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves*
be cheated? 8No, you yourselves do wrong
and cheat, and *you do* these things *to your*
brethren! 9Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?
Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor
idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals,[a]
nor sodomites, 10nor thieves, nor covetous,
nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners
will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And such
were some of you. But you were washed, but
you were sanctified, but you were justified
in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the
Spirit of our God.

Glorify God in Body and Spirit

12All things are lawful for me, but all
things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under
the power of any. 13Foods for the stomach
and the stomach for foods, but God will

5:13 [a]Deuteronomy 17:7; 19:19; 22:21, 24; 24:7 **6:9** [a]That is, catamites



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. | 1 CORINTHIANS 3:21, 23

Because we are related to the Sovereign God, all things belong to us. The Head of the church is ever working all things for His glory and our good. This year has been a year when I have seen a half-dozen of my dearest friends taken to heaven. We know far too much to weep too long for them. I was encouraged by noticing in this passage that among the list of all things that belong to us, the apostle included the word *death*. Death belongs to me because I belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. Death may grab my body someday and say, "Now you belong to me!" but, no! It is not true. Because of the Lord Jesus, all things are mine. That includes death! Death belongs to me!

destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

15Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her?* For *"the two,"* He says, *"shall become one flesh."*[a] 17But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him.*

18Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body[a] and in your spirit, which are God's.

Principles of Marriage

7 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. 3Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does.* And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does.* 5Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment. 7For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

8But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; 9but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn *with passion.*

Keep Your Marriage Vows

10Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. 11But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.

12But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 14For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. 15But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases.* But God has called us to peace. 16For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?

Live as You Are Called

17But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches. 18Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. 19Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God *is what matters.*

6:16 [a]Genesis 2:24 **6:20** [a]NU-Text ends the verse at *body.*



I want you to be without care.
1 CORINTHIANS 7:32

It is God's intention that we live without care and never be fretful or full of anxiety. We have traded a load-carrying single harness for a double "yoke," and it is our privilege, at His invitation, to continually shift the heavy stuff to the one with the strength. He wants us in this *with* Him, but not to show our brawn—how foolish to flex our scrawny muscles in the face of Him who holds the world in His hand! No. He—how amazing is this?—longs for our presence with Him, to have us present to Him. This, then, is the partnership. He supplies the power and strength and wisdom; we supply the joy of being in His presence, the delight in this carefree journey! This is the day that the Lord has made—and carries! I will rejoice and be glad in it! That is my reasonable service! I will play in the sun! I will be full of gratitude and joy! He will take my load, and I will enjoy His gift of freedom from heaviness.



20 Let each one remain in the same calling in
which he was called. 21 Were you called *while*
a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if
you can be made free, rather use *it*. 22 For he
who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is the
Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called
while free is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought
at a price; do not become slaves of men.
24 Brethren, let each one remain with God in
that *state* in which he was called.

To the Unmarried and Widows

25 Now concerning virgins: I have no
commandment from the Lord; yet I give
judgment as one whom the Lord in His
mercy has made trustworthy. 26 I suppose
therefore that this is good because of the
present distress—that *it is* good for a man
to remain as he is: 27 Are you bound to a
wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you
loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.
28 But even if you do marry, you have not
sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not
sinned. Nevertheless such will have trou-
ble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time *is*
short, so that from now on even those who
have wives should be as though they had
none, 30 those who weep as though they did
not weep, those who rejoice as though they
did not rejoice, those who buy as though
they did not possess, 31 and those who use
this world as not misusing *it*. For the form
of this world is passing away.

32 But I want you to be without care. He
who is unmarried cares for the things of
the Lord—how he may please the Lord.
33 But he who is married cares about the
things of the world—how he may please
his wife. 34 There is[a] a difference between a
wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman
cares about the things of the Lord, that
she may be holy both in body and in spirit.
But she who is married cares about the
things of the world—how she may please
her husband. 35 And this I say for your own
profit, not that I may put a leash on you,
but for what is proper, and that you may
serve the Lord without distraction.

36 But if any man thinks he is behaving
improperly toward his virgin, if she is past
the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let

7:34 [a]M-Text adds *also*.

him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry. [37]Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin,[a] does well. [38]So then he who gives *her*[a] in marriage does well, but he who does not give *her* in marriage does better.

[39]A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. [40]But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

Be Sensitive to Conscience

8 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. [2]And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. [3]But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

[4]Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one. [5]For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), [6]yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.

[7]However, *there is* not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. [8]But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

[9]But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. [10]For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? [11]And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? [12]But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. [13]Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

A Pattern of Self-Denial

9 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? [2]If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

[3]My defense to those who examine me is this: [4]Do we have no right to eat and drink? [5]Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? [6]Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working? [7]Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

[8]Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? [9]For it is written in the law of Moses, *"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain."*[a] Is it oxen God is concerned about? [10]Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. [11]If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? [12]If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more?

Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. [13]Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings of* the altar? [14]Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

[15]But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. [16]For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if

7:37 [a]Or *virgin daughter* **7:38** [a]NU-Text reads *his own virgin.*
9:9 [a]Deuteronomy 25:4

The Stage Is Bare

The stage is bare,
The crowds are gone;
Love we shared
Still lingers on.
We sang and played,
We laughed and cried—
And in our fumbling way we tried
To say what only hearts can know;
And all too soon we had to go.
But now here in this darkened room
Just empty seats—just me . . . and You.

It was easy to call You "Lord"
When a thousand voices sang Your praise—
But there's no one to hear me now
So hear me now . . . be near me now, I pray.

The stage is bare,
The crowds are gone;
Lord, now's the time I need Your Song
To give me joy and certainty
When no one else is watching me.
I need You more than words can say;
Tomorrow's such a daily day—
And I so need to feel You then
Holding my hand—
Please hold me then
I need You . . . Lord.

It was easy to call You "Lord"
When a thousand voices sang Your praise—
But there's no one to hear me now
So hear me now . . . be near me now, I pray.

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:27

The concert had been a sellout. An enthusiastic audience of all ages. Waves of laughter and applause between the music and the singing. A great night!

By the time we were finished tearing down displays in the lobby, putting equipment in the bus, and changing our clothes in the dressing room, the building was empty. All the lights were out except for one lone lightbulb dangling by a frayed cord from the ceiling above the stage. As we carried our bags across the stage to the back door, we stopped for a moment and talked about the evening. The single light and the huge silent room were such a contrast to the spotlights and the excitement of an hour ago.

"It was a great night," one of the performers said. "But the question is, do the things we sang and said then work now?"

There is always a danger that politicians will start believing their own press releases, that kids will not be capable of separating the stage and the floodlights from their Monday mornings and daylight.

Bill and I have spent a great deal of time with aspiring young artists, not so much to help them "make it," but in the hopes of teaching them some things that may save them from themselves when they do make it.

In our culture, talent often results in what the world would call "success," but it has been our experience that success is often much harder to deal with than failure. In fact, failure is often good for us human beings; we learn from our failures. We're often destroyed by success.

The Palm Sunday story in the Bible carries a modern application. It's easy to praise the Lord in a crowd of cheering worshipers, singing songs and "lifting holy hands." But when the dust clears, and the music stops, and the lights are reduced to a bare lightbulb dangling from a frayed cord, what then? Is our praise as convincing when we're alone in an elevator? Does it "preach" when we're the only person in the congregation?

I once heard someone say about a Christian speaker: "I'd be more impressed if I ever heard him pray when he wasn't onstage."

My father was a pastor, and I often heard him quote 1 Corinthians 9:27, Paul's high standard, which my dad held up for himself: "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." That verse was like a caution light that flashed over my parents' ministry. It is a caution light for me. It is a warning for Bill's and my ministry of writing and speaking and parenting and living in our little town. What we do when the stage is dark and bare is so much more important than what we do when it's bright and full.

When our traveling groups meet for a time of prayer before concerts, we have often prayed that we would be as real at McDonald's after the concert as we seem during the concert, that our lives with the stagehands and the auditorium's staff would be as convincing as our lives in front of the spotlight.

When it is all said and done, I hope our children and our parents, our neighbors, and the people with whom we work will see our praise lived out much more articulately than we are ever able to express in words and in print.

May our failures and shortcomings be redeemed by the sweet love and grace of Jesus so that His spirit makes a more lasting memory than our fragile humanity.



I do not preach the gospel! [17]For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. [18]What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ[a] without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

Serving All Men

[19]For though I am free from all *men,* I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; [20]and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law,[a] that I might win those *who are* under the law; [21]to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God,[a] but under law toward Christ[b]), that I might win those *who are* without law; [22]to the weak I became as[a] weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men,* that I might by all means save some. [23]Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you.*

Striving for a Crown

[24]Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it.* [25]And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown.* [26]Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. [27]But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Old Testament Examples

10 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, [2]all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, [3]all ate the same spiritual food, [4]and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. [5]But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness.

[6]Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. [7]And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, *"The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."*[a] [8]Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; [9]nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; [10]nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. [11]Now all[a] these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

[12]Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. [13]No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it.*

Flee from Idolatry

[14]Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. [15]I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. [16]The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body

9:18 [a]NU-Text omits *of Christ.* **9:20** [a]NU-Text adds *though not being myself under the law.* **9:21** [a]NU-Text reads *God's law.* [b]NU-Text reads *Christ's law.* **9:22** [a]NU-Text omits *as.* **10:7** [a]Exodus 32:6 **10:11** [a]NU-Text omits *all.*



No temptation has overtaken you
except such as is common to man;
but God is faithful, who will not
allow you to be tempted beyond
what you are able, but with
the temptation will also make
the way of escape, that you
may be able to bear it.
1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

If temptation overtakes us, if we give in to it and ruin our reputation and break the hearts of those we trust, it is not because we had no choice. God has provided a way of escape, one that is obvious and doable.

Temptation is part of the fallen world, part of the human condition. But yielding to it and letting it sweep us away to darkness and pain, is our choice and ours alone. Jesus' temptation was to run away—from the Cross, from humiliation of sin, from the belittling final place a human being can go in every way. Yet He walked resolutely to the shame so that we can forever be free of it.

The part of the prayer of Jabez that is most perceptive is this: "Keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain" (1 Chr. 4:10). This prayer was answered for us all by the Cross. His grace is sufficient. We are no longer *victims* of sin unless we choose to be.



of Christ? [17]For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

[18]Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? [19]What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? [20]Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. [21]You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. [22]Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

All to the Glory of God

[23]All things are lawful for me,[a] but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me,[b] but not all things edify. [24]Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*.

[25]Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; [26]for *"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."*[a]

[27]If any of those who do not believe invites you *to dinner,* and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. [28]But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake;[a] for *"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."*[b] [29]"Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another *man's* conscience? [30]But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for *the food* over which I give thanks?

[31]Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. [32]Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, [33]just as I also please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

11 Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.

Head Coverings

[2]Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the

10:23 [a]NU-Text omits *for me.* [b]NU-Text omits *for me.* **10:26** [a]Psalm 24:1
10:28 [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. [b]Psalm 24:1

traditions just as I delivered *them* to you.
3But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God. 4Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. 5But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. 6For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. 7For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. 10For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* head, because of the angels. 11Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. 12For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God.

13Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? 15But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her[a] for a covering. 16But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God.

Conduct at the Lord's Supper

17Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you,* since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others;* and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you.*

Institution of the Lord's Supper

23For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat;[a] this is My body which is broken[b] for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it,* in remembrance of Me."

26For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Examine Yourself

27Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood[a] of the Lord. 28But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner[a] eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's[b] body. 30For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

33Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

Spiritual Gifts: Unity in Diversity

12 Now concerning spiritual *gifts,* brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:
2You know that[a] you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. 3Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

4There are diversities of gifts, but the

11:15 [a]M-Text omits *to her.* **11:24** [a]NU-Text omits *Take, eat.* [b]NU-Text omits *broken.* **11:27** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the blood.* **11:29** [a]NU-Text omits *in an unworthy manner.* [b]NU-Text omits *Lord's.* **12:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *when.*

These Things Remain

GLORIA GAITHER

The barn was disassembled from the
homeplace some years back,
'Cause barnwood was more valuable
than barns;
And with it went the stanchions where
the cattle used to wait,
The haymow, and the pride in
family farms.
The tire swing, the orchard, and the
hen house disappeared
About the time you went away
to school;
They went the way of duck tail,
white bucks with pink and grey
And big white sidewall tires we
thought were cool.
The landscape keeps on changing,
and the fads will come and go;
The things of earth can never stay
the same.
But some things you can count on
and know that they are yours—
Yes, through it all you know these
things remain:

The happiness that comes from finding
joy in simple things
Like eating supper by the kitchen fire
And watching trees you planted grow
so tall they shade the house
Or laughing children swinging on a tire.
And nature still will lavish all its riches
without charge,
The golden sunset or the emerald hills,
And dangle crystal drops of rain like
diamonds from the leaves,
Or freeze them into jeweled
window sills.
These things remain.

The place you went to high school
has burned down to the ground,
And grass has covered over where
it stood.
The apple and the cherry tree you
used to like to climb
Has long ago been split for firewood.
A house now stands where you and all
your cousins used to strip
For skinny-dippin' in the quarry hole;
Grandmas, aunts and uncles are all
buried over there
Where evenings we now take our
quiet stroll.
And most things keep on changing as
time marches along;
You can't expect them just to stay
the same,

For birth and death and growing are a
part of every day—
But, even so, my dear, some
things remain;

We still can judge a person by the
value of his word
And love is best expressed by
what we do.
The milk of human kindness still
nurtures those who hurt;
The universe still echoes what is true.
Wisdom and integrity, honest
and grace
Will live on after all of us are gone.
And God will make provision for the
dark and lonely place;
He knows that we just have to
have a song!
These things remain.
We've put away the playthings our
children thought were great—
The dolls and all the puppets and
the stilts,
The "Star Wars" and the Weebles, the
Barbies and the Gnomes,
The villages the Lincoln Logs had built.

The swing set sits there silent at the
bottom of the hill;
The paddleboat last summer
sprang a leak,
And I think Suzanne mentioned
maybe going with a friend
To look for an apartment late
last week.
I guess we can't expect for things
to stay just like they were;
Changes are predictable as rain.
Yet with all the changes, I wanted
you to know
Some lovely and eternal things
remain:

A home is still the place that you can
come to night or day,
And "fam'ly" are the folks that take
you in.
And those who still believe in you
through all your ups and downs
Are still the precious treasure we
call "friends."
The Lord who has been faithful to
lead us from the start
Will walk with us until our journey's
through,
And I will walk beside you "for better
or for worse"—
I really meant it when I said, "I do."
This will remain.

same Spirit. [5]There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. [6]And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. [7]But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all:* [8]for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, [9]to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same[a] Spirit, [10]to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. [11]But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Unity and Diversity in One Body

[12]For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. [13]For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into[a] one Spirit. [14]For in fact the body is not one member but many.

12:9 [a]NU-Text reads *one.* **12:13** [a]NU-Text omits *into.*



BILL GAITHER

Now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. | 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12

Not too long ago, I had surgery on each of my eyes to remove cataracts. Each eye was repaired separately, so after the first surgery, I covered the newly repaired eye with my hand to compare my vision with the eye that was still clouded. When I compared the clear vision of my good eye with the impaired eye, I suddenly realized that I had been looking through a yellowish-brown haze that darkened everything in my line of sight.

It was unbelievable and, to be honest, it was disturbing how dark and cloudy my vision had become without my realizing it. Day by day, over the course of probably twenty years, my vision slowly grew more and more impaired. Yet because it happened so gradually, and because I couldn't compare what I was seeing to what I *should've* been seeing, there was no way to really comprehend what I was missing until the fog was removed by my surgeon's hands.

This principle is not only a physical one but a spiritual truth as well. The world we know is a vague silhouette of what eternity will hold for us. All we have ever known is a dark, limited view with which we have nothing to compare. But one day, the blinders will be off and we will have clarity we never knew! Our questions, our doubts, our confusion will all be abundantly clear.

Until that day, we are engaged in a walk of faith in which we are dependent on the One whose vision is perfect and whose hand is ready to guide us through the dark.

15If the foot should say, "Because I
am not a hand, I am not of the body," is
it therefore not of the body? 16And if the
ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I
am not of the body," is it therefore not of
the body? 17If the whole body *were* an eye,
where *would be* the hearing? If the whole
were hearing, where *would be* the smell-
ing? 18But now God has set the members,
each one of them, in the body just as He
pleased. 19And if they were all one member,
where *would* the body *be?*

20But now indeed *there are* many mem-
bers, yet one body. 21And the eye cannot
say to the hand, "I have no need of you";
nor again the head to the feet, "I have no
need of you." 22No, much rather, those
members of the body which seem to be
weaker are necessary. 23And those *members*
of the body which we think to be less hon-
orable, on these we bestow greater honor;
and our unpresentable *parts* have greater
modesty, 24but our presentable *parts* have
no need. But God composed the body, hav-
ing given greater honor to that *part* which
lacks it, 25that there should be no schism
in the body, but *that* the members should
have the same care for one another. 26And
if one member suffers, all the members
suffer with *it;* or if one member is honored,
all the members rejoice with *it*.

27Now you are the body of Christ, and
members individually. 28And God has
appointed these in the church: first apos-
tles, second prophets, third teachers, after
that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps,
administrations, varieties of tongues. 29*Are*
all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teach-
ers? *Are* all workers of miracles? 30Do all
have gifts of healings? Do all speak with
tongues? Do all interpret? 31But earnestly
desire the best[a] gifts. And yet I show you a
more excellent way.

The Greatest Gift

13 Though I speak with the tongues
of men and of angels, but have not
love, I have become sounding brass or
a clanging cymbal. 2And though I have
the gift of prophecy, and understand all
mysteries and all knowledge, and though
I have all faith, so that I could remove
mountains, but have not love, I am noth-
ing. 3And though I bestow all my goods to
feed *the poor,* and though I give my body
to be burned,[a] but have not love, it profits
me nothing.

4Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does
not envy; love does not parade itself, is
not puffed up; 5does not behave rudely,
does not seek its own, is not provoked,
thinks no evil; 6does not rejoice in iniq-
uity, but rejoices in the truth; 7bears all
things, believes all things, hopes all things,
endures all things.

8Love never fails. But whether *there are*
prophecies, they will fail; whether *there*
are tongues, they will cease; whether *there*
is knowledge, it will vanish away. 9For we
know in part and we prophesy in part. 10But
when that which is perfect has come, then
that which is in part will be done away.

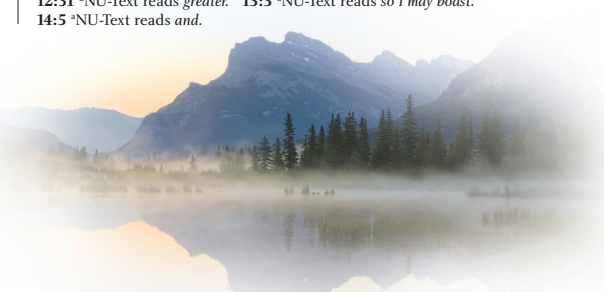
11When I was a child, I spoke as a child,
I understood as a child, I thought as a
child; but when I became a man, I put
away childish things. 12For now we see in a
mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I
know in part, but then I shall know just as
I also am known.

13And now abide faith, hope, love, these
three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

Prophecy and Tongues

14 Pursue love, and desire spiritual
gifts, but especially that you may
prophesy. 2For he who speaks in a tongue
does not speak to men but to God, for no
one understands *him;* however, in the spirit
he speaks mysteries. 3But he who proph-
esies speaks edification and exhortation
and comfort to men. 4He who speaks in a
tongue edifies himself, but he who proph-
esies edifies the church. 5I wish you all
spoke with tongues, but even more that
you prophesied; for[a] he who prophesies *is*
greater than he who speaks with tongues,

12:31 [a]NU-Text reads *greater.* **13:3** [a]NU-Text reads *so I may boast.*
14:5 [a]NU-Text reads *and.*



I Could Never Outlove the Lord

There've been times when giving and loving brought pain,
And I promised I would never let it happen again;
But I found out that loving was well worth the risk,
And that even in losing, you win.

I'm going to live the way He wants me to live;
I'm going to give until there's just no more to give;
I'm going to love, love 'til there's just no more love;
I could never, never outlove the Lord.

He showed us that only through dying we live,
And He gave when it seemed there was nothing to give;
He loved when loving brought heartache and loss;
He forgave an old rugged cross.

I'm going to live the way He wants me to live;
I'm going to give until there's just no more to give;
I'm going to love, love 'til there's just no more love;
I could never, never outlove the Lord.



Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4–6

"I've had it with him!" Bill said as he came through the back door. "He just takes and takes and takes. It would be different if I could ever see him maturing, but working with him is like pouring water in a sieve!" Bill disappeared into the bedroom, then came out in his Bermuda shorts. "I'm going out to mow."

There wasn't much for me to say. He was right. Our friend did seem to be so immature, and I'd watched Bill being used over and over. It seemed that this normally longsuffering man I had married was at the end of his patience. This time he'd been done in; it seemed to me our friend had gone beyond simple immaturity to what bordered on dishonesty.

Round and round the yard went the mowing tractor. Bill had a habit of doing his heavy problem solving while mowing the grass or cutting branches or picking up pinecones in the yard.

But it wasn't long before I heard the motor stop. Bill walked into the kitchen, where I was feeding our little girl her lunch.

"You know what I'm going to do about that?" He rightly assumed I knew what "that" meant.

I waited.

"I'm going to keep on doing just what I've been doing. I'm going to keep on giving and loving and forgiving him. What else can I do? As long as God keeps giving grace and forgiveness to me, I don't have a choice."

What came next was a line that has been repeated very often in our home over the years.

"After all, we could never outlove the Lord," Bill said.

Together we talked about how this truth could be lived out in this particular situation. And it wasn't long before we were in the family room by

the piano putting the goodness of the Lord into a song. We recounted the times God had been a patient Friend, forgiving Father, gracious Counselor to us. In that session we also talked about the limits of our responsibility—our "job description" in matters of the soul. We reminded ourselves that loving, forgiving, going the second mile were our responsibility. Changing hearts, shaping minds, transforming natures were God's responsibility.

As I expect most people would, we asked ourselves where the limits were. Are there limits? We felt directed to a similar situation, where Peter asked Jesus, "So, how many times do I forgive? As many as seven times?" In Scripture *seven* is often used as the perfect number. Did Peter choose this number thinking he was being greatly generous with his mercy? For him did this represent the far-out limit of human perfection?

Jesus' answer blew Peter away. "Not seven times must you forgive, but seventy times seven." He seemed to be calling for perfection to an infinite multiple; He seemed to be asking Peter to limit himself only by the limits of his Source of grace and forgiveness.

Did Jesus also teach confrontation? Yes. Did He model teaching and giving direction? Yes. But always He modeled forbearance, patience, and a belief in the positive potential of what the worst human being could become. "Go, and sin no more." "This day you shall be with Me in paradise." These are examples of how Jesus handled those who had been in the wrong.

That day we finished the song "I Could Never Outlove the Lord." We went on doing what we'd been doing. And God went on doing what He does. We are still friends with the person Bill pondered on the tractor. He is still in the process of becoming what God has in mind. He has been greatly used by the Lord to reach hundreds of people we could never have reached. Is he perfect? Not yet. Are we perfect? Far from it.

But what God has started in all of us He has promised to finish. And now, twenty-five years after that day at the crossroads of a friendship, we are finding it is still true: we could never, never outlove the Lord.

Maybe one day Bill and I will write one of those little books of practical insights and call it *Treasures from the Tractor*!



unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

Tongues Must Be Interpreted

[6]But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? [7]Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? [8]For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? [9]So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. [10]There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them *is* without significance. [11]Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks *will be* a foreigner to me. [12]Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts, let it be* for the edification of the church *that* you seek to excel.

What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:15

[13]Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. [14]For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. [15]What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. [16]Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? [17]For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

[18]I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; [19]yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Tongues a Sign to Unbelievers

[20]Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

[21]In the law it is written:

> *"With men of other tongues and other lips*
> *I will speak to this people;*
> *And yet, for all that, they will not hear*
> *Me,"*[a]

says the Lord.

[22]Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. [23]Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? [24]But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. [25]And thus[a] the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

Order in Church Meetings

[26]How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. [27]If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be* two or at the most three, *each* in turn, and let one interpret. [28]But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. [29]Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. [30]But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. [31]For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. [32]And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. [33]For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

14:21 [a]Isaiah 28:11, 12 **14:25** [a]NU-Text omits *And thus.*

34 Let your[a] women keep silent in the
churches, for they are not permitted to
speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as
the law also says. 35 And if they want to
learn something, let them ask their own
husbands at home; for it is shameful for
women to speak in church.

36 Or did the word of God come *origi-*
nally from you? Or *was it* you only that it
reached? 37 If anyone thinks himself to be a
prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge
that the things which I write to you are the
commandments of the Lord. 38 But if any-
one is ignorant, let him be ignorant.[a]

39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly
to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak
with tongues. 40 Let all things be done
decently and in order.

The Risen Christ, Faith's Reality

15 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you
the gospel which I preached to you,
which also you received and in which you
stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you
hold fast that word which I preached to
you—unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that
which I also received: that Christ died for our
sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He
was buried, and that He rose again the third
day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He
was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After
that He was seen by over five hundred breth-
ren at once, of whom the greater part remain
to the present, but some have fallen asleep.
7 After that He was seen by James, then by all
the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by
me also, as by one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who
am not worthy to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church of God.
10 But by the grace of God I am what I am,
and His grace toward me was not in vain;
but I labored more abundantly than they
all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which*
was with me. 11 Therefore, whether *it was* I
or they, so we preach and so you believed.

14:34 [a]NU-Text omits *your.* **14:38** [a]NU-Text reads *if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. | 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58

A dear Christian friend had this verse made into a plaque and it has been hanging in my study for forty-four years. There have been times I looked at the plaque and said, "Paul was correct. There is no end to ministry! Every day the responsibilities pile up! I am abounding in the work of the Lord." One day, when I was under unusual stress for the sheer amount of work before me, I glanced at the plaque and saw something quite different. I read the verse as I believe God intended it. It is not "always abounding in the work" but rather, "always abounding in life, in the work of the Lord." I was to be an abounding Christian. That is a million light years away from the idea that I am buried in work. The plaque means more to me than ever. The sister who gave me the plaque is now in heaven. In a few hours I will join her, but until then, I pray I will ever be abounding in my life in the work of the Lord.

The Risen Christ, Our Hope

12 Now if Christ is preached that He
has been raised from the dead, how do
some among you say that there is no res-
urrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no
resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not
risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our
preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also
empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false wit-
nesses of God, because we have testified
of God that He raised up Christ, whom
He did not raise up—if in fact the dead
do not rise. 16 For if *the* dead do not rise,
then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is
not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still
in your sins! 18 Then also those who have
fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If
in this life only we have hope in Christ, we
are of all men the most pitiable.

The Last Enemy Destroyed

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead,
and has become the firstfruits of those who
have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man *came*
death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of
the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so
in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each
one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits,
afterward those *who are* Christ's at His com-
ing. 24 Then *comes* the end, when He delivers
the kingdom to God the Father, when He
puts an end to all rule and all authority and
power. 25 For He must reign till He has put
all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy
that will be destroyed *is* death. 27 For *"He has
put all things under His feet."*[a] But when He
says "all things are put under *Him,"* *it is* evi-
dent that He who put all things under Him
is excepted. 28 Now when all things are made
subject to Him, then the Son Himself will
also be subject to Him who put all things
under Him, that God may be all in all.

Effects of Denying the Resurrection

29 Otherwise, what will they do who are
baptized for the dead, if the dead do not
rise at all? Why then are they baptized for
the dead? 30 And why do we stand in jeop-
ardy every hour? 31 I affirm, by the boasting
in you which I have in Christ Jesus our
Lord, I die daily. 32 If, in the manner of men,
I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what
advantage *is it* to me? If *the* dead do not rise,
"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"[a]
33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company cor-
rupts good habits." 34 Awake to righteousness,
and do not sin; for some do not have the
knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame.

A Glorious Body

35 But someone will say, "How are the
dead raised up? And with what body do
they come?" 36 Foolish one, what you sow is
not made alive unless it dies. 37 And what you
sow, you do not sow that body that shall be,
but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some
other *grain.* 38 But God gives it a body as He
pleases, and to each seed its own body.
39 All flesh *is* not the same flesh, but *there
is* one *kind of* flesh[a] of men, another flesh of
animals, another of fish, *and* another of birds.
40 *There are* also celestial bodies and
terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the
celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the ter-
restrial *is* another. 41 *There is* one glory of
the sun, another glory of the moon, and
another glory of the stars; for *one* star dif-
fers from *another* star in glory.
42 So also *is* the resurrection of the dead.
The body is sown in corruption, it is raised
in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor,
it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness,
it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural
body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a
natural body, and there is a spiritual body.
45 And so it is written, *"The first man Adam
became a living being."*[a] The last Adam
became a life-giving spirit.
46 However, the spiritual is not first, but
the natural, and afterward the spiritual.
47 The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of
dust; the second Man *is* the Lord[a] from
heaven. 48 As *was* the *man* of dust, so also
are those *who are made* of dust; and as *is*
the heavenly *Man,* so also *are* those *who are*
heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image
of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear[a] the
image of the heavenly *Man.*

Our Final Victory

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and
blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;

15:27 [a]Psalm 8:6 **15:32** [a]Isaiah 22:13 **15:39** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of flesh.* **15:45** [a]Genesis 2:7 **15:47** [a]NU-Text omits *the Lord.* **15:49** [a]M-Text reads *let us also bear.*

nor does corruption inherit incorruption.
51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not
all sleep, but we shall all be changed—
52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,
at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will
sound, and the dead will be raised incor-
ruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For
this corruptible must put on incorruption,
and this mortal *must* put on immortal-
ity. 54 So when this corruptible has put on
incorruption, and this mortal has put on
immortality, then shall be brought to pass
the saying that is written: *"Death is swal-
lowed up in victory."*[a]

55 *"O Death, where is your sting?*[a]
O Hades, where is your victory?"[b]

56 The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength
of sin *is* the law. 57 But thanks *be* to God,
who gives us the victory through our Lord
Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be
steadfast, immovable, always abounding in
the work of the Lord, knowing that your
labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Collection for the Saints

16 Now concerning the collection for
the saints, as I have given orders to
the churches of Galatia, so you must do also:
2 On the first *day* of the week let each one of
you lay something aside, storing up as he
may prosper, that there be no collections

15:54 [a]Isaiah 25:8 **15:55** [a]Hosea 13:14 [b]NU-Text reads *O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?*



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. | 1 CORINTHIANS 16:2

He was a turquoise jewelry dealer and moved from place to place, following the flea markets and antique shows around. For some reason known only to himself, he began to read the Bible. He was first astounded, then convicted, then saved! Now here he was with a whole new perception of life, and he had to tell the tale. He told some friends of ours. They were thrilled because they knew what he was talking about—they were already Christians. But as he shared his findings, they were astounded!

He had read in that Bible that he was to share, to tithe, as it were. Since he had no background in church formats and hadn't heard that he was to take his tithe to church, he did an obvious and very moving thing. He counted up how much money he usually made in a year, divided by the days in a year, and arrived at a certain amount for each day. Then he took a tenth of that and put that much extra in his pocket every day. Then he went about his turquoise dealing with this daily earnest prayer on his mind, "Dear Lord, who needs this tenth of my money today? Lead me to the right person and I'll give it to him." He was as good as his prayer and his word, and it was a daily adventure that had him so thrilled he could hardly stand it! Not bad for a novice, eh?

when I come. [3]And when I come, whomever you approve by *your* letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. [4]But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

Personal Plans

[5]Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). [6]And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. [7]For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.

[8]But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. [9]For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are* many adversaries.

[10]And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do*. [11]Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren.

[12]Now concerning *our* brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time.

Final Exhortations

[13]Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. [14]Let all *that* you *do* be done with love.

[15]I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—[16]that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with *us*.

[17]I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. [18]For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

Greetings and a Solemn Farewell

[19]The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. [20]All the brethren greet you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

[21]The salutation with my own hand—Paul's.

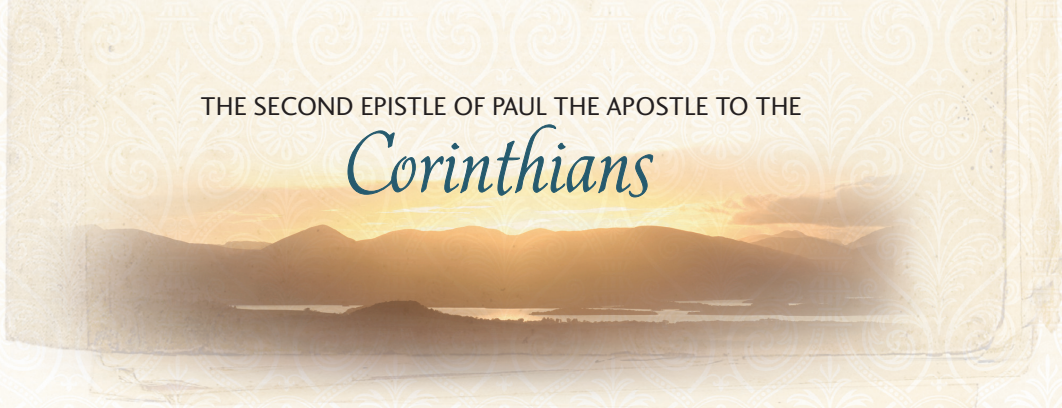
[22]If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.[a] O Lord, come![b]

[23]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. [24]My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

16:22 [a]Greek *anathema* [b]Aramaic *Maranatha*

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

Corinthians



Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother,

To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

[2]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Comfort in Suffering

[3]Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, [4]who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. [5]For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. [6]Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. [7]And our hope for you *is* steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also *you will partake* of the consolation.

Delivered from Suffering

[8]For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. [9]Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, [10]who delivered us from so great a death, and does[a] deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver *us,* [11]you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our[a] behalf for the gift *granted* to us through many.

Paul's Sincerity

[12]For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. [13]For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end [14](as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also *are* ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Sparing the Church

[15]And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit— [16]to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. [17]Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? [18]But *as* God *is* faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. [19]For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. [20]For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. [21]Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, [22]who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

[23]Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. [24]Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

2 But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. [2]For if I make you sorrowful, then

1:10 [a]NU-Text reads *shall.* **1:11** [a]M-Text reads *your behalf.*

who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?

Forgive the Offender

3And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is *the joy* of you all. 4For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

5But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe. 6This punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority *is* sufficient for such a man, 7so that, on the contrary, you *ought* rather to forgive and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8Therefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love to him. 9For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 10Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one[a] for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Triumph in Christ

12Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.

14Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? 17For we are not, as so many,[a] peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

2:10 [a]NU-Text reads *For indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it.* **2:17** [a]M-Text reads *the rest.*

Not that we are sufficient of
ourselves to think of anything
as being from ourselves,
but our sufficiency is from God.
2 CORINTHIANS 3:5

It's to God's credit when we are exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit. We don't have to grit our teeth, strain every muscle, or wear ourselves out trying to get these fruits to grow from our lives. We just have to be in love with the tree like the limbs are in love with the trunk.

We don't have to constantly worry about making the right moves, always searching for God's will for our lives. We will be relaxed in knowing that God gives us a lot of latitude in choosing the "right" that is tailor-made for us. If we have "fear and trembling" it's because we're trying to work out our own salvation. But it is *God*, not us, who works in us in two perfect ways: to *will* for His good pleasure and to *do* for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12). What's His good pleasure? That we be complete, of one mind, and at peace. Let's not mess it up. Relax and let the fruit fill out.

Gospel Songs

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3, 4

GOD SO beautifully and perfectly designed the church, the body of Christ, to reflect Christ Himself—His love, His sacrifice, His strength, and even His friendship. Jesus explained to His disciples that "greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends," and the very next day He set the ultimate example and did just that, sacrificing His life (John 15:13). But He didn't just die. He also lived. He lived our life full of suffering, temptation, and weakness, and it was all for a purpose. Hebrews 4:15 explains, "For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." And it is that same empathy that God intended His church, the body of Christ, to have for one another, for He "comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Cor. 1:3, 4).

That divine comfort was felt by Joseph Scriven when he experienced some of the deepest heartache of his life. After his fiancée drowned the day before their wedding, he packed up his life and headed to Canada from his native Ireland, seeking a fresh start. Ten years later, when his mother back in Ireland was ill, he wrote a poem, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," to strengthen and encourage her. His mother was so moved by it, she passed the poem on to a friend who subsequently published the poem. It was around this same time that Scriven found love again and became engaged. But that woman contracted tuberculosis, and she passed away before they could get married. After all this loss, all this suffering and pain and grief, Scriven continued to serve the Lord and continued trusting Him. But how? How could someone who faced so much continue to stand under the weight of such sorrow? Because Jesus did. And because Joseph Scriven had God's Word to tell Him what to do: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). Scriven set an example with his life and with his words: *Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.*

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Joseph Scriven, 1855

1. What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

2. Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

3. Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield thee;
Thou wilt find a solace there.

We all, with unveiled face,
beholding as in a mirror the
glory of the Lord, are being
transformed into the same image
from glory to glory, just as
by the Spirit of the Lord.
2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

The glory of the *law* faded on the face of Moses, faded and passed away, but the glory of *grace* becomes more and more intense on ours until at last our faces will be totally replaced by sheer glory and light. The law cools down, but grace heats up.

The stuff of life is merely the sandpaper that files the flint for the sparks of grace to ignite. Neither the flint nor the abrasions are necessary when the flame is burning brightly.

"He is the light" is more than a metaphor. He is the fire and light of our lives here, and in heaven He will be sun and moon (Rev. 21:23). Heaven will be light because He is there, a light presence. Grace is all there is there. No judgment, no discouragement, no rebuke—only grace. And that will be glory.

Christ's Epistle

3 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you or *letters* of commendation from you? [2]You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; [3]clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is,* of the heart.

The Spirit, Not the Letter

[4]And we have such trust through Christ toward God. [5]Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, [6]who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit;[a] for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Glory of the New Covenant

[7]But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, [8]how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? [9]For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. [10]For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. [11]For if what is passing away *was* glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious.

[12]Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— [13]unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. [14]But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. [15]But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. [16]Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. [17]Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. [18]But we all, with

3:6 [a]Or *spirit*

unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Light of Christ's Gospel

4 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 2But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Cast Down but Unconquered

7But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8*We are* hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12So then death is working in us, but life in you.

13And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, *"I believed and therefore I spoke,"*[a] we also believe and therefore speak, 14knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present *us* with you. 15For all things *are* for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

4:13 [a]Psalm 116:10

Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
2 CORINTHIANS 4:4

We don't have to take Jesus to the world. He has come already. He is the definitive statement of God. He is the bright light of God's self. He is what God is like. We can never misunderstand God if we see Jesus for ourselves.

Satan's only trick is to veil or stand between human beings and Jesus. He distorts the image; he twists the reality; he bends the light rays. He is religion. He is the charlatan. He is agnosticism. He is humanism. The only way we can have any part in witnessing to the world is to be, to live a new way: to be inclusive, not exclusive; to be merciful, not judgmental; to be loving, not legalistic; to forgive, not keep score. To be peace without fear. This is how we can unmask Satan. Living simply like Jesus is like shoving Satan out of the way from standing between people and Christ. Once the glory hits their faces, Satan shrinks like a raisin in the sun and people are transformed by the light.



Seeing the Invisible

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even
though our outward man is perishing, yet
the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.
17 For our light affliction, which is but for a
moment, is working for us a far more exceed-
ing *and* eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do
not look at the things which are seen, but
at the things which are not seen. For the
things which are seen *are* temporary, but the
things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Assurance of the Resurrection

5 For we know that if our earthly house, *this*
tent, is destroyed, we have a building from
God, a house not made with hands, eternal in
the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly
desiring to be clothed with our habitation
which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been
clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we
who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened,
not because we want to be unclothed, but
further clothed, that mortality may be swal-
lowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared
us for this very thing *is* God, who also has
given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So *we are* always confident, knowing
that while we are at home in the body we
are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by
faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes,
well pleased rather to be absent from the
body and to be present with the Lord.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether
present or absent, to be well pleasing to
Him. 10 For we must all appear before the
judgment seat of Christ, that each one
may receive the things *done* in the body,
according to what he has done, whether
good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the ter-
ror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we
are well known to God, and I also trust are
well known in your consciences.

Be Reconciled to God

12 For we do not commend ourselves
again to you, but give you opportunity to



LISA DAGGS • Soloist, Homecoming Artist

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. | 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7–10

God calls us "earthen vessels," or in other translations, "jars of clay." In Paul's day, clay jars were very ordinary vessels, easily chipped or broken and often flawed. Seems like an unlikely place for treasures. God's truth shows us that true beauty lies in what is inside the container and not in the appearance of the vessel. Outwardly, jars of clay show no worth or wealth to human eyes; they are just empty jars. But jars are designed to hold something. Inwardly, we hold the treasure of God Himself, living within us. We receive what we were created to hold.

Sometimes we thank God for cleansing us, but then question Him about our scars as if He missed something when He ran us through the wash.

boast on our behalf, that you may have *an answer* for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. [13]For if we are beside ourselves, *it is* for God; or if we are of sound mind, *it is* for you. [14]For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; [15]and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

[16]Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him thus* no longer. [17]Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. [18]Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, [19]that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

[20]Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. [21]For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Marks of the Ministry

6 We then, *as* workers together *with Him* also plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain. [2]For He says:

> *"In an acceptable time I have heard you,*
> *And in the day of salvation I have helped you."*[a]

Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

[3]We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. [4]But in all *things* we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, [5]in stripes,

6:2 [a]Isaiah 49:8

Well, the next time you are confronted with your scars, remember they show you the times when God refused to let go of you when you were struggling. Scars are the direct result of the process of a wound repaired and is a natural result of the healing process. We get a lot of things wrong. We forget, we fall down, and we sin—jars of clay—but He still entrusts us to hold this precious treasure "that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us." So let's try to remember: those cracks and chips now serve a purpose. It shows the message that shines in and through us, the ministry of reconciliation. What an incredible treasure we carry!

Dear Lord, thank You for trusting us to carry such a great gift in this world. Reveal to us the true beauty in jars of clay—so sturdy, yet so fragile and covered with imperfections—is the treasure we contain. Help us not to mask the scars or fix the pot in our attempt to sell ourselves as something greater than we are. We love you, Lord, and are grateful You let nothing go to waste by using our worn and scarred vessels as a container for Your glory! Amen.

We do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18

Estate planning takes up way too much time and energy. It is of course, a part of earth life. To be a good steward of what has been given is also a biblical concept. Yet, in truth, our real inheritance cannot be delegated in estate planning meetings. And in reality, our children do not inherit our earthly goods. They inherit our riches or poverty of the spirit.

As we live, our earth efforts—physical fitness, beauty, health, clever wit, fine wardrobe, personal belongings (and our need for them) are being stripped away. What remains is not what we have (our physical and material assets), but only what we are. In the becoming of what we are, we have been stockpiling, or forfeiting, eternal assets. No wonder we are advised by the Great Estate Planner to accumulate eternal treasures. They are good for *here* and good for *there*.



in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; [6]by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, [7]by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, [8]by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; [9]as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and *yet* not killed; [10]as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

Be Holy

[11]O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. [12]You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your *own* affections. [13]Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.

[14]Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? [15]And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? [16]And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you[a] are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

"I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people."[b]

[17]Therefore

"Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."[a]
[18] *"I will be a Father to you,*
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the Lord Almighty."[a]

7 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

6:16 [a]NU-Text reads *we*. [b]Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 32:38; Ezekiel 37:27
6:17 [a]Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:34, 41 **6:18** [a]2 Samuel 7:14

A Going Home

GLORIA GAITHER

The weary sun
cools mellow in the west
and calls to me
to find a place where I can rest.
And like the sun
I long to find
an old familiar path that winds
its way back to a place
Where they're expecting me
and I can be
where I belong.

The sounds I hear—
The voices that I know so well—
The laughter and the music,
The children so excited to be first
to tell the most amusing
thing that happened
Since we walked into the morning,
went our separate ways.

Without a doubt I know it:
The table will be set,
And there will be a place for me
Just where I always sit
There, just across from Father
by the window.
Before I even get there
I can smell the fire
burning in the kitchen,
And the cold that chills me to
the bone
somehow knows the warmth
is coming
and lets go of me.

As much as I anticipate
the faces loved so well,
I long to find a place to be alone
when I get home.
Solitude:
a place and time to think;
a chance to drink in all the joy
that I have
known;
a room all my own.
For I plan to go on growing,
secure in knowing
I am loved . . .
and I am home.

The Old Rugged Cross Made the Difference

'Twas a life filled with aimless desperation;
Without hope walk'd the shell of a man.
Then a hand with a nailprint stretch'd downward;
Just one touch! Then a new life began.

And the old rugged cross made the difference
In a life bound for heartache and defeat;
I will praise Him forever and ever,
For the cross made the difference in me.

Barren walls echoed harshness and anger;
Little feet ran in terror to hide.
Now those walls ring with love, warmth, and laughter,
Since the Giver of Life moved inside.

There's a room filled with sad, ashen faces;
Without hope death has wrapp'd them in gloom.
But at the side of a saint there's rejoicing,
For life can't be sealed in a tomb.

And the old rugged cross made the difference
In a life bound for heartache and defeat;
I will praise Him forever and ever,
For the cross made the difference in me.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

One of the all-time favorite songs by Fanny Crosby says, "This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long." We are all storytellers. The regular days of our lives gradually weave themselves into a drama; most writers are simply observers and tellers of the stories that are all around them.

I think of the stories of three men. The first was a young father named Bob, who was an explosion waiting to happen. He was gifted with his hands and had a bright mind, but he felt as if his life were an endless cycle of meaningless activity. Eat, sleep, go to work, come home, and start again. He had a well-paying job, a wife who loved him, and three beautiful children, but his days were full of frustration that he vented at home to those he loved best. Weekend parties only served to increase his sense of dissatisfaction, for once the alcohol haze wore off, the emptiness still gnawed at his soul.

His wife and children tried to stay out of his way; they learned to not make waves when he was in a bad mood. During those rare moments when he was happy, they absorbed his affections like sponges, but eventually they learned to be wary even then. His personality could change as quickly as the weather during tornado season on the plains.

Several people invited Bob to church, but he didn't want anything to do with it. He'd attended as a kid, and he'd long ago walked away from the restrictions of that! But at this loving church the people kept praying for Bob. His wife took the children to church in spite of Bob's opposition, and one day she convinced him to go with her to a concert of a singer named Doug Oldham (for Doug's story, see page 1399). *A concert wouldn't be too religious*, Bob thought, so he went. About halfway through the concert, the singer told his story—how he used to be so hard to live with and so selfish that his wife finally took their children and left him, how he had contemplated suicide when faced with the reality of what he had done to a family that had loved him.

Bob could hardly believe what he was hearing. It could have been his story. It was as if the singer knew what was going on inside him—the way he did things he down deep didn't really mean (though he seemed powerless to stop himself), the way he was hurting the family he loved, the way he felt empty and helpless to change his life.

Bob talked to the pastor after the concert about his soul, but he wasn't ready to surrender his life. Some months later his wife convinced him to go with her to a revival where Doug Oldham was

to sing. Bob never got to hear Doug sing that night. The power of prayer was so strong at the beginning of the service that he knew he had to respond. He made his way to the altar. Doug saw him coming and met him there. Together they prayed that God would change Bob from the inside out. He did! And what a change!

Bob was a new man. He never took another drink. His anger began to subside. His lifelong habit of smoking stopped that night. His family could hardly believe the change in him at home. One day his little daughter said to her mother, "Something's happened to Daddy! He's not mad anymore." She was right. He was becoming a walking example of Paul's words, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Not long after Bob told his story at our local church, Bill and I attended two funerals in our small town. The first was that of a man who had lived a selfish, reckless life. He had destroyed most of his relationships and had damaged people who got close to him. He died cursing those who tried to help him and refused all efforts at reconciliation. The visitors to the funeral home were few, and those who came were uncomfortable. What does one say? For those who had to live with him, there seemed more relief and guilt than genuine grief. There were no words of hope. The tone of the room was depressing, indeed.

The other funeral was after the death of Bill's grandfather, Grover Gaither, a simple man who lived what we thought was an ordinary life. A man of quiet integrity, his word was his contract. He had farmed a few Indiana acres and, when younger, worked in a factory. On weekends he traveled with Bill, Danny, and me, when the Gaither Trio sang in churches. He and Blanche never missed a service in their church; they supported their pastors; they housed evangelists and missionaries in their farmhouse. I'm sure Grover would have told you he had had a good life, though he had never done anything very spectacular.

How surprised we were to see the funeral home packed with people of all ages. They filed by Grover's casket to tell stories. "He put me through electrical school," said one middle-aged man. "I stayed at their house when I had no place to go," said another. "He always cut my hair on Saturdays," said a young boy from the neighborhood. Each person went on to say something about Grover's being "a good man" and how he had quietly impacted that person's life in practical ways.

There was much laughter and storytelling reminiscent of Grover's great sense of humor. And such rejoicing! The tears of sadness were shed through smiles, remembering a man who had "died with his boots on" and his fields ready for planting, come spring.

Bob's story. The story of a sad, wasted life. Grover's story. My story. Your story. How it is told in the end and what the story says depends on what each of us does with Jesus.

For us, it has been the stories told—and lived—by real people that convinced us to stay with the way of the Cross. These stories made their way into a song we called "The Old Rugged Cross Made the Difference." For us, it truly has.



The Corinthians' Repentance

[2]Open *your hearts* to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. [3]I do not say *this* to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. [4]Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

[5]For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears. [6]Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, [7]and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

[8]For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. [9]Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. [10]For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. [11]For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what* clearing *of yourselves, what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. [12]Therefore, although I wrote to you, *I did* not *do it* for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

The Joy of Titus

[13]Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. [14]For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. [15]And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. [16]Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

Every soul [in heaven] is as a note in some concert of delightful music, that sweetly harmonizes with every other note, and all together blend in the most rapturous strains in praising God and the Lamb forever.

JONATHAN EDWARDS

Excel in Giving

8 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: [2]that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. [3]For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, [4]imploring us with much urgency that we would receive[a] the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. [5]And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God. [6]So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace

8:4 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *that we would receive,* thus changing text to *urgency for the favor and fellowship. . . .*



in you as well. [7]But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—*see* that you abound in this grace also.

Christ Our Pattern

[8]I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. [9]For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

[10]And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; [11]but now you also must complete the doing *of it;* that as *there was* a readiness to desire *it,* so *there* also *may be* a completion out of what *you* have. [12]For if there is first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to what one has, *and* not according to what he does not have.

[13]For *I do* not *mean* that others should be eased and you burdened; [14]but by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may supply* their lack, that their abundance also may *supply* your lack—that there may be equality. [15]As it is written, *"He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack."*[a]

8:15 [a]Exodus 16:18



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. | 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19

Claude and I were amused by a quote in the *Farm Journal* magazine: "We were kids when everything was the kids' fault. Now, we're parents when everything is the parents' fault."

I often speak with Christian parents who are devastated and heartbroken because their child, whom they loved and reared in the ways of the Lord, has slowly begun traveling a wayward road. While their main concern is their child, they begin to feel inadequate as parents. The guilt and pain they suffer is enormous as they wonder where they failed or what they did wrong. The family suffers.

There once was a Father who had two children. He provided them with a beautiful and perfect environment to call home. He gave them divine instructions. If they obeyed, they could live a life of perfection and enjoy perfect peace and happiness. This Father was God. Unlike His other created beings, God gave His children a free will. He gave them the right to choose and to make their own decisions. One day, Satan, clothed as a serpent, one of God's good creatures, came to visit. The master deceiver insinuated a falsehood and portrayed rebellion as clever. Throughout the course of the conversation, he caused the woman to doubt God's instructions she had received. The choice Eve and Adam made that day introduced them to fear, disappointment, sorrow, death, and separation from God their Father. It also

Collection for the Judean Saints

16 But thanks *be* to God who puts[a] the
same earnest care for you into the heart
of Titus. 17 For he not only accepted the
exhortation, but being more diligent, he
went to you of his own accord. 18 And we
have sent with him the brother whose
praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the
churches, 19 and not only *that,* but who was
also chosen by the churches to travel with
us with this gift, which is administered by
us to the glory of the Lord Himself and *to
show* your ready mind, 20 avoiding this: that
anyone should blame us in this lavish gift
which is administered by us— 21 providing
honorable things, not only in the sight of
the Lord, but also in the sight of men.
22 And we have sent with them our brother
whom we have often proved diligent in many
things, but now much more diligent, because
of the great confidence which *we have* in you.
23 If *anyone inquires* about Titus, *he is* my part-
ner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if
our brethren *are inquired about, they are* mes-
sengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.
24 Therefore show to them, and[a] before the
churches, the proof of your love and of our
boasting on your behalf.

8:16 [a]NU-Text reads *has put.* **8:24** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and.*

changed the course of history. God's children had made a heartbreaking decision (Gen. 3). His love for His children never wavered, but neither did the character of the universal laws He had set forth for all mankind. He did not become lenient in order to comply with His children's shortcoming.

I am reminded of a lady I met at a mother-daughter banquet. She had two sons who were raised in a Christian home. You could tell that she was proud of her capable young men, who received athletic scholarships to college. At some point, one son chose to follow the wide path that promises much, but delivers destruction. There were long periods when she and her husband had no idea of his whereabouts or of his condition. Occasionally, they would happen to see him walking the streets and offer to take him home. Most often he'd refuse. The mother realized that God was letting them know that her son was alive. Friendly advisors suggested that she and her husband not be so firm. They chose not to compromise their convictions. The mother said that during a heated confrontation with her son about the situation, she said, "OK, if what you're doing is so right, I'll start going with you and we'll do it together." The look of horror on her son's face expressed more than any words he could have uttered. He said, "No, Mom, you don't ever want to do that!" She had no intention of ever conforming to his lifestyle, but a mother's words of exasperation caused a rebellious son to see the importance of the uncompromising anchor that had held consistently true in his parents. Eventually, they regained their son.

God has never changed His requirements. Yet, His love is so great that He made provision to get all His children back. God was in Christ at Calvary, reconciling the world to Himself and destroying the work of the devil (2 Cor. 5:19). As God's children have opportunity to return to Him, parents have hope in His promise that their children will come home.

Administering the Gift

9 Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; 2for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority. 3Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready; 4lest if *some* Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting.[a] 5Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which *you had* previously promised, that it may be ready as *a matter of* generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

The Cheerful Giver

6But this *I say:* He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7*So let* each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8And God *is*

9:4 [a]NU-Text reads *this confidence.*



ERNIE HAASE • Homecoming Artist, *Ernie Haase and Signature Sound*, Formerly with *The Cathedral Quartet*

Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. | 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5

I had an old man tell me that a bad thought is like a bird: you can't keep it from flying over your head, but you can keep it from landing on your head and building a nest.

Every time I read 1 Corinthians 10:5, I think of my flowerbeds. My mind is full of great memories and powerful words of life. All it takes is one weed to make my mind and, ultimately, my entire day ugly.

Many things come into my mind each day that are not spiritual or healthy for this child of God. The only way I know to take every thought captive and change my mind is to mentally pull the weeds.

In the springtime I walk around and see what new weed popped up overnight. And it seems overnight because weeds grow so fast.

Taking a little time each day to pull those ugly weeds keeps my garden growing and my flowers looking beautiful. Just a little work and those weeds are gone. But, every day there are a few new weeds to pull.

Just a little time in God's Word, a few minutes of meditation, a prayer, a wonderful conversation with a friend, or any other activity that clears my mind and sets it on a more heavenly plain is like pulling a weed for me. It is still work, but if I stay at it, it's just a few weeds a day.

Don't let the flowerbed of your mind go too long with bad thoughts. Those ugly weeds will take over and crush the beauty of the love of God and His wonderful fragrance in your life.

able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things,* may have an abundance for every good work. 9As it is written:

> *"He has dispersed abroad,*
> *He has given to the poor;*
> *His righteousness endures forever."*[a]

10Now may[a] He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11while *you are* enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. 12For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, 13while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal sharing with them and all *men,* 14and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. 15Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!

The Spiritual War

10 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence *am* lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you. 2But I beg *you* that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Reality of Paul's Authority

7Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he *is* Christ's, even so we *are* Christ's.[a] 8For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us[a] for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed— 9lest I seem to terrify you by letters. 10"For *his* letters," they say, "*are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible." 11Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *we will* also *be* in deed when we are present.

Limits of Paul's Authority

12For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. 14For we are not overextending ourselves (as though *our authority* did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; 15not boasting of things beyond measure, *that is,* in other men's labors, but having hope, *that* as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16to preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

17But *"he who glories, let him glory in the* LORD."[a] 18For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Concern for Their Faithfulness

11 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. 2For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. 3But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity[a] that is in Christ. 4For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

9:9 [a]Psalm 112:9 **9:10** [a]NU-Text reads *Now He who supplies . . . will supply. . . .*
10:7 [a]NU-Text reads *even as we are.* **10:8** [a]NU-Text omits *us.*
10:17 [a]Jeremiah 9:24 **11:3** [a]NU-Text adds *and purity.*

Paul and False Apostles

5For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6Even though *I am* untrained in speech, yet *I am* not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested[a] among you in all things.

7Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? 8I robbed other churches, taking wages *from them* to minister to you. 9And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep *myself*. 10As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 11Why? Because I do not love you? God knows!

12But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. 13For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Reluctant Boasting

16I say again, let no one think me a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little. 17What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. 18Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. 19For you put up with fools gladly, since you *yourselves* are wise! 20For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours *you,* if one takes *from you,* if one exalts himself, if

11:6 [a]NU-Text omits *been.*



RONNIE BOOTH • Homecoming Artist, *The Booth Brothers*

Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. | 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5

A Christlike character doesn't just happen; it is the result of daily effort in right thinking. The principle of sowing and reaping is as certain in the hidden realm of thought as in the visible world. The great Charles Spurgeon said, "There are not so many hours in a year as there may be thoughts in an hour."

If thoughts become our enemies, they will be a force too strong for us and will drag us down to ruin. Many littles make much; so many small thoughts make a great weight of sin.

Our mind truly is like a garden and can be cultivated intelligently or allowed to run wild. Depending on which you and I choose, our thoughts will bring forth something useful or destructive. The Lord has given us the ability to "weed out" all the wrong, impure thoughts and focus on "whatever things

one strikes you on the face. [21]To *our* shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also.

Suffering for Christ

[22]Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I. [23]Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. [24]From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. [25]Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; [26]*in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; [27]in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—[28]besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. [29]Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation?*

[30]If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. [31]The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. [32]In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; [33]but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

The Vision of Paradise

12 It is doubtless[a] not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: [2]I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of

12:1 [a]NU-Text reads *necessary, though not profitable, to boast.*

are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy" (Phil 4:8). Praise God that we have the ability to choose!

We can choose to meditate on God's promises and allow the truth of those promises to bring us the comfort and joy we need. Remember we cannot have a need that our Lord will not supply. He is our sympathizing Savior and promised to never leave us nor forsake us. David wrote in the Book of Psalms, "In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul" (94:19).

Friend, don't allow discouraging or sinful thoughts to keep you down. Use your God given ability to focus your mind on His promises and enjoy the reward of taking your thoughts captive.

the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. [3]And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— [4]how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. [5]Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. [6]For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me.

Gospel is a good music sent down from the Lord to save the people. That's all you got to make out of it.

THOMAS DORSEY

The Thorn in the Flesh

[7]And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. [8]Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. [9]And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10]Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Signs of an Apostle

[11]I have become a fool in boasting;[a] you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. [12]Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. [13]For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

Love for the Church

[14]Now *for* the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. [15]And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

[16]But be that *as it may,* I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! [17]Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? [18]I urged Titus, and sent our brother with *him.* Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did *we* not *walk* in the same steps?

[19]Again, do you think[a] that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But *we do* all things, beloved, for your edification. [20]For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and *that* I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; [21]lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

Coming with Authority

13 This *will be* the third *time* I am coming to you. *"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."*[a] [2]I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write[a] to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare— [3]since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. [4]For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.

[5]Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

12:11 [a]NU-Text omits *in boasting.* **12:19** [a]NU-Text reads *You have been thinking for a long time. . . .* **13:1** [a]Deuteronomy 19:15 **13:2** [a]NU-Text omits *I write.*

[6]But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

Paul Prefers Gentleness

[7]Now I[a] pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified. [8]For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. [9]For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete. [10]Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

Greetings and Benediction

[11]Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

[12]Greet one another with a holy kiss.

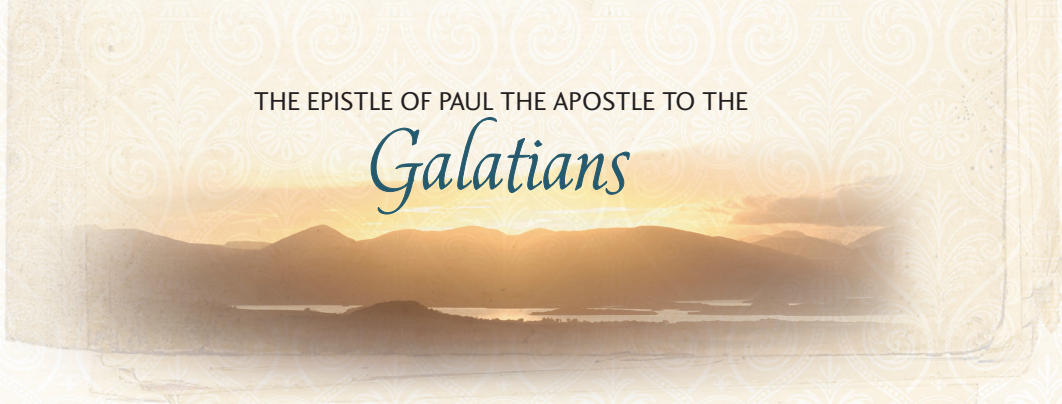
[13]All the saints greet you.

[14]The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.

13:7 [a]NU-Text reads *we*.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

Galatians



Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), [2]and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

[3]Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, [4]who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, [5]to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

Only One Gospel

[6]I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, [7]which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. [8]But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. [9]As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

[10]For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Call to Apostleship

[11]But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. [12]For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it,* but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[13]For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it. [14]And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

[15]But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, [16]to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, [17]nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Contacts at Jerusalem

[18]Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter,[a] and remained with him fifteen days. [19]But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. [20](Now *concerning* the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)

[21]Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. [22]And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ. [23]But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to* destroy." [24]And they glorified God in me.

Defending the Gospel

2 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with *me.* [2]And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. [3]Yet not even Titus who *was* with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. [4]And *this occurred* because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we

1:18 [a]NU-Text reads *Cephas.*

have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), [5]to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

[6]But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed *to be something* added nothing to me. [7]But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter [8](for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), [9]and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. [10]*They desired* only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

No Return to the Law

[11]Now when Peter[a] had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; [12]for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. [13]And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

[14]But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you[a] compel Gentiles to live as Jews?[b] [15]We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, [16]knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

[17]"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! [18]For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. [19]For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. [20]I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. [21]I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain."

My heart, which is so full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary.

MARTIN LUTHER

Justification by Faith

3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth,[a] before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you[b] as crucified? [2]This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? [3]Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? [4]Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

[5]Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?— [6]just as Abraham *"believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*[a] [7]Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. [8]And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."*[a] [9]So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

The Law Brings a Curse

[10]For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, *"Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the*

2:11 [a]NU-Text reads *Cephas.* **2:14** [a]NU-Text reads *how can you.* [b]Some interpreters stop the quotation here. **3:1** [a]NU-Text omits *that you should not obey the truth.* [b]NU-Text omits *among you.* **3:6** [a]Genesis 15:6 **3:8** [a]Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14

book of the law, to do them."[a] [11]But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for *"the just shall live by faith."*[a] [12]Yet the law is not of faith, but *"the man who does them shall live by them."*[a]

[13]Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, *"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"*[a]), [14]that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The Changeless Promise

[15]Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though *it is* only a man's covenant, yet *if it is* confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. [16]Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, *"And to your Seed,"*[a] who is Christ. [17]And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ,[a] that it should make the promise of no effect. [18]For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

Purpose of the Law

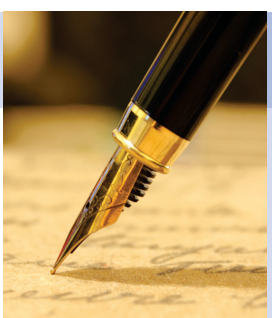
[19]What purpose then *does* the law *serve?* It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. [20]Now a mediator does not *mediate* for one *only,* but God is one.

[21]*Is* the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. [22]But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. [23]But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. [24]Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. [25]But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Sons and Heirs

[26]For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. [27]For as many of you

3:10 [a]Deuteronomy 27:26 **3:11** [a]Habakkuk 2:4 **3:12** [a]Leviticus 18:5 **3:13** [a]Deuteronomy 21:23 **3:16** [a]Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7 **3:17** [a]NU-Text omits *in Christ.*



ED MILLER • Author, Bible Teacher, *Homecoming Magazine*
Devotional Contributor

Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." | GALATIANS 4:30

It is not grace speaking in this passage. It is the law! The bondwoman and her son, in the context of Galatians 4, represent the law. Casting out the bondwoman and her son is the same as casting out the law as a rule of life. The purpose of the law is to lead us to Christ, to show us our desperate need of Him. The law is saying, "Please, cast me out! I can only curse you! You can never live up to my standards! Cast me out and look to Jesus. Live by grace and not by me!" The law is saying that! How foolish for us to live under the law as a rule of life when even the law encourages us not to do that.

Senses

GLORIA GAITHER

If I couldn't see the world
The fifty shades of greening spring
The heron in flight
The flag whipping color to the wind—
Northeast and shifting—
The clear white of the moon
The slant-eyed smile of my child
And the water's sandy edge
Life would come to me in new ways
Drawing me into its current
By the subtleties of sound—
The lapping of the waves against
the boat
Broadcasting the water's depth
Some fifty miles from shore,
The yellow smell of still
Before a Midwestern storm
Comes banging the highest oak leaves
Like a leather symbol prelude
To a tragic opera
Or the unforgettable rush a lump makes
Rising in the throat.

as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. [28]There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [29]And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

4 Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, [2]but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. [3]Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. [4]But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born[a] of a woman, born under the law, [5]to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

[6]And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" [7]Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of[a] God through Christ.

Fears for the Church

[8]But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. [9]But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? [10]You observe days and months and seasons and years. [11]I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

[12]Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I *became* like you. You have not injured me at all. [13]You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. [14]And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus. [15]What[a] then was the blessing you *enjoyed?* For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. [16]Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

[17]They zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. [18]But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. [19]My little children, for whom I labor in birth again

4:4 [a]Or *made* **4:7** [a]NU-Text reads *through God* and omits *through Christ.* **4:15** [a]NU-Text reads *Where.*



KELLY NELON CLARK • Homecoming Artist, *The Nelons*

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. | GALATIANS 6:9

There was a time in my life when days of despair and devastation seemed endless. I was really trying to do all the good and right things, but bad things just kept happening. These were the kind of times that would make a person just want to give up. My newborn baby nearly died and was in intensive care for ten days. My mother did die, and at the same time I faced a terrible, heartbreaking divorce. Soon to follow was the loss of my father and grandmother—all this was in the course of four years. I kept asking myself when my "due season" would come. I was "weary," so weary I just wanted to die!

until Christ is formed in you, [20]I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.

Two Covenants

[21]Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? [22]For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. [23]But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, [24]which things are symbolic. For these are the[a] two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—[25]for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—[26]but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. [27]For it is written:

"Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband."[a]

[28]Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was,* are children of promise. [29]But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now. [30]Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? *"Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."*[a] [31]So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Christian Liberty

5 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free,[a] and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. [2]Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. [3]And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. [4]You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. [5]For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. [6]For in Christ Jesus neither

4:24 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *the.* **4:27** [a]Isaiah 54:1
4:30 [a]Genesis 21:10 **5:1** [a]NU-Text reads *For freedom Christ has made us free; stand fast therefore.*

Maybe you can relate. Possibly you've asked this same question. How do we know when "due season" has come? What I discovered was that my "due season" was not based upon time or a change in my circumstances. Even though I was dealing with depression, divorce, and death in my own life, my "due season" came when I began to pour myself into others who were hurting and in need of comfort. That is when I began to experience the true joy of the Lord, which became my strength when I had none of my own.

Isn't that just like Christ? He suffered beyond description, but when he looked ahead at the Cross, He counted that suffering as all joy. He knew that His suffering on the Cross would bring to us eternal life, when one day in "due season," we as children of God would trade our suffering for a crown of life and reap eternal joy because of our Lord's grace and mercy to us.

Let's Just Praise the Lord

We'd like to thank you for your kindness; we thank you for your love.
We've been in heav'nly places, felt blessings from above.
We've been sharing all the good things the fam'ly can afford;
Let's just turn our praise t'ward heaven and praise the Lord.

Let's just praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let's just lift our hands to heaven and praise the Lord!
Let's just praise the Lord, praise the Lord—
Let's just lift our hands t'ward heaven and praise the Lord!

Just the precious name of Jesus is worthy of our praise;
Let us bow our knees before Him, our hands to heaven raise.
When He comes in clouds of glory, with Him we'll ever reign;
We'll just lift our happy voices, and praise His name!

Let's just praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let's just lift our hands to heaven and praise the Lord!
Let's just praise the Lord, praise the Lord—
Let's just lift our hands t'ward heaven and praise the Lord!



But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

GALATIANS 6:14

It was a concert on the East Coast. We had been warned that Easterners would be very reserved and we shouldn't expect much of a response from such a conservative audience. Much to our surprise, the people were warm and excited.

The audience was a multiethnic blend of believers with a wide range of ages. Right from the first, they sang along enthusiastically and seemed to enjoy both the humor and the content as the concert progressed through the evening. As we shared what God was teaching us and our young family, we felt a ready identity with our audience—people from many different backgrounds who had found Christ to be the answer for their families too.

We sang "Because He Lives," "There's Something About that Name," and "The King Is Coming." At the end of the concert we were overwhelmed when the audience members leaped to their feet and kept applauding. At first, it was gratifying to know they agreed with our message. But the applause continued until we felt uncomfortable with the response. They were no longer praising the Lord but instead our group.

Finally Bill began to sing at the piano, "Oh, How I Love Jesus!" Gradually the audience stopped applauding and joined him. We could sense the praise turn again from being horizontally directed to us to being vertically directed to God, where it belonged.

That night after we got back to the bus, we talked about what had happened. "We need a song," Bill said, "that would thank people for being so kind and loving to us but would help us all turn the praise heavenward."

"Why don't we just say exactly that?" I suggested.

So Bill turned to an electric board key we had on the bus, and I grabbed a yellow tablet and began to write.

In the years since, we have at timesbeen so full of gratitude and awe that we haven't been able to do anything else but sing "Let's Just Praise the Lord." At other times we haven't

been able to see how God could possibly be there in the dark circumstances of life, yet we have learned that He was always—in all things—up to something good in our lives, and that "good" is always eternal good. We are learning that life is a process, and to God, process isn't a means to an end; it is the goal, because His goal is to crowd us into a relationship with Him. Whatever sends us running to Him, makes us embrace Him, causes us to depend on Him, is the best good in our lives.

We once received a letter from a man criticizing this song and its use of the word *just*. "Why would you say 'just' praise the Lord?" he wrote. "Why not say, 'We always praise the Lord!' or 'We're happy to praise the Lord'?"

The same week we got a letter from a father who had backed out of his garage and run over his three-year-old son, playing on his tricycle behind the car. The despair over such a tragedy would have been unbearable had this man not been able to hold on to the hope that in all things God was at work in their family's lives for some eternal good. "Thank you for the song," he wrote. "I am discovering that we 'just' praise the Lord when there's nothing else we can do."

Some of life's circumstances seem senseless, and others, too painful to bear. But when we base our confidence on a perspective broader than this world's view, we can trust that what our sovereign God is working to accomplish is not the servant of this world's circumstances; rather, this world's circumstances are always being made the servant of His purposes.

Let's just praise the Lord!



circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Love Fulfills the Law

7You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8This persuasion does not *come* from Him who calls you. 9A little leaven leavens the whole lump. 10I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

11And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. 12I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

13For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*[a] 15But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Walking in the Spirit

16I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery,[a] fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21envy, murders,[a] drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Bear and Share the Burdens

6 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5For each one shall bear his own load.

Be Generous and Do Good

6Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

7Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Glory Only in the Cross

11See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! 12As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom[a] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Blessing and a Plea

16And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

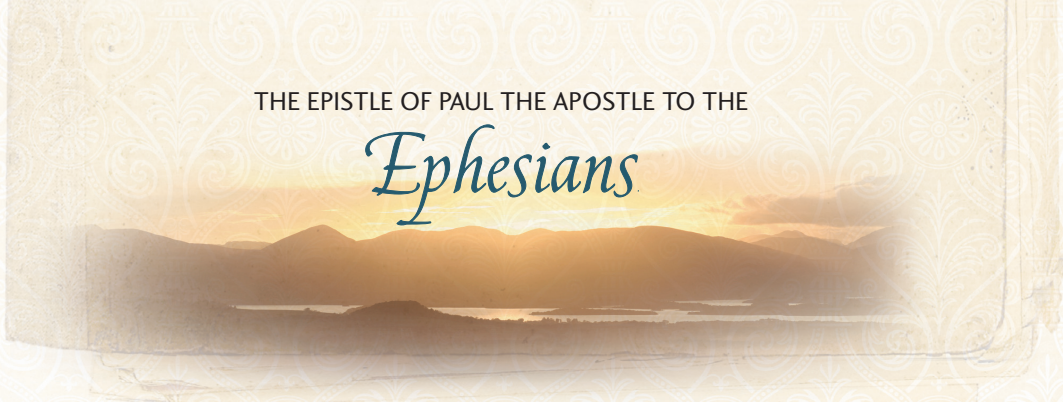
17From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

5:14 [a]Leviticus 19:18 **5:19** [a]NU-Text omits *adultery.* **5:21** [a]NU-Text omits *murders.* **6:14** [a]Or *by which* (the cross)

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

Ephesians



Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

[2]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Redemption in Christ

[3]Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, [4]just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, [5]having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, [6]to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

[7]In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace [8]which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, [9]having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, [10]that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both[a] which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. [11]In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, [12]that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

[13]In Him you also *trusted,* after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, [14]who[a] is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom

[15]Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, [16]do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: [17]that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, [18]the eyes of your understanding[a] being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, [19]and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power [20]which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places,* [21]far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

[22]And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, [23]which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

By Grace Through Faith

2 And you *He made alive,* who were dead in trespasses and sins, [2]in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, [3]among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

1:10 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *both.* **1:14** [a]NU-Text reads *which.*
1:18 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *hearts.*

4But God, who is rich in mercy, because
of His great love with which He loved us,
5even when we were dead in trespasses,
made us alive together with Christ (by
grace you have been saved), 6and raised *us*
up together, and made *us* sit together in the
heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7that in the
ages to come He might show the exceeding
riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward
us in Christ Jesus. 8For by grace you have
been saved through faith, and that not
of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9not of
works, lest anyone should boast. 10For we
are His workmanship, created in Christ
Jesus for good works, which God prepared
beforehand that we should walk in them.

I really think that you are what you sing. Shallow theology will produce shallow music, and shallow music will produce shallow theology. It's a cyclical thing. What we are challenged to do in our day is to reinsert the theological element both into our lives and into our music.

DANIEL BLOCK

Brought Near by His Blood

11Therefore remember that you, once
Gentiles in the flesh—who are called
Uncircumcision by what is called the
Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—
12that at that time you were without Christ,
being aliens from the commonwealth of
Israel and strangers from the covenants of
promise, having no hope and without God
in the world. 13But now in Christ Jesus you
who once were far off have been brought
near by the blood of Christ.

Christ Our Peace

14For He Himself is our peace, who has
made both one, and has broken down the
middle wall of separation, 15having abol-
ished in His flesh the enmity, *that is,* the
law of commandments *contained* in ordi-
nances, so as to create in Himself one new
man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, 16and
that He might reconcile them both to God

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

EPHESIANS 2:19–22

The living building that Christ claims as His is holy—both the mini-temples, which are small edifices in their own right, and the grand temple built of those small edifices. This living building is much like a colony animal in the sea: each separate cell is a pulsating, ingesting, eliminating individual, and the cells are connected to form a community that is also alive because of its living cells operating as one.

When a predator attacks one of the individuals, the body corporate releases its defense mechanisms protecting the assailed member, too weak and simple in its makeup to defend itself.

I think of children and rape victims and the elderly when I read this. But God knows we are all weak and vulnerable. Surely we do know enough to not invite a foreign attack by lending our bodies to addictions that would destroy not only the integrity of us as individuals, but would bring a threat to the whole healthy community.

But as a living community, we protect, nurture, and grow because as a whole, with Christ as the head, we are one body, one household, and one building.

in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. [17]And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. [18]For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Christ Our Cornerstone

[19]Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20]having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, [21]in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, [22]in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

The Mystery Revealed

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— [2]if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, [3]how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, [4]by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), [5]which in other ages



BUDDY MULLINS • Homecoming Artist

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. | EPHESIANS 1:3–10

I went through a period of time not many years ago when I lost sight of who God was to me and who I was to Him. When what we do becomes more important than who we are, we have lost the true center in our life. God showed me through His Word that I was His beloved child and that what I did had nothing to do with His endless love for me. If you are ever feeling like your life just doesn't count, grab ahold of these verses. I know that they have lifted my spirit to be reminded we are chosen by God and to know the ends He went to redeem us and to give us a direction for our lives. I am overwhelmed by how much God wants a relationship with me! I am a part of what brings Him pleasure. Wow! What a wonderful realization!

was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: [6]that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, [7]of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

Purpose of the Mystery

[8]To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, [9]and to make all see what *is* the fellowship[a] of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;[b] [10]to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places,* [11]according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, [12]in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. [13]Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Appreciation of the Mystery

[14]For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,[a] [15]from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, [16]that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, [17]that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, [18]may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— [19]to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

[20]Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, [21]to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

3:9 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *stewardship* (dispensation). [b]NU-Text omits *through Jesus Christ.* **3:14** [a]NU-Text omits *of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

EPHESIANS 3:9, 10

If the principalities and powers of heaven itself were not made privy to the wisdom of God, how amazing is it that God chose to let His wisdom be known by His people and then taught by them to the powers of heaven. How can this be? How could we ever know such things and then be commissioned as teachers?

Such wisdom must and can only be known through revelation—through a breakthrough to mystery. Is it all right for us to ask for wisdom? Oh, yes—and we must! God won't belittle us for asking. He will reveal wisdom if we know how ignorant we really are of pure truth. But the minute we are manipulative or inauthentic, God will leave us to our own wisdom. Oh, my! What a horribly dismal life. No moments of revelation. No breakthroughs of pure truth. No transcending the dull limits of our human schooling in blindness.

But the wisdom breakthroughs from above are, according to James, "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

Gospel Songs

Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

EPHESIANS 3:13–19

THE CHRISTIAN faith is filled with, what seem to be in the human mind, paradoxes. In order to live, we must die (Luke 9:24). When we are weak, then we are strong (2 Cor. 12:10). In order to be first, we must be last (Matt. 20:16). And sometimes, in our darkest moments, the love of God shines the brightest in our souls.

Samuel Trevor Francis experienced such a time in his young adulthood. He grew up in a home that laid for him a strong foundation of faith—he even sang in the church choir—but as soon as he struck out on his own, doubts began to seep in. He got a job in London and began working, all the while wrestling with nagging doubt and the pull for him to return to His first love. He wrote about his turning point:

> *I was on my way home from work and had to cross Hungerford Bridge to the south of the Thames. During the winter's night of wind and rain and in the loneliness of that walk, I cried to God to have mercy on me. I stayed for a moment to look at the dark waters flowing under the bridge, and the temptation was whispered to me: "Make an end of all this misery." I drew back from the evil thought, and suddenly a message was borne into my very soul: "You do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?" I at once answered, "I do believe," and I put my whole trust in Him as my Savior.*

How incredible that just when Satan seemed to be screaming the loudest, the still, small voice of the Lord, in His deep, deep love, ultimately prevailed!

But that wasn't the end of his story; it was only the beginning. Samuel Francis cultivated a deep, deep love for the Savior, joining a local body of believers, preaching the gospel at revivals, and leading worship. He later went on to write this powerful hymn, and he continued to fight the good fight, finishing well the race set before him—after ninety-two years!

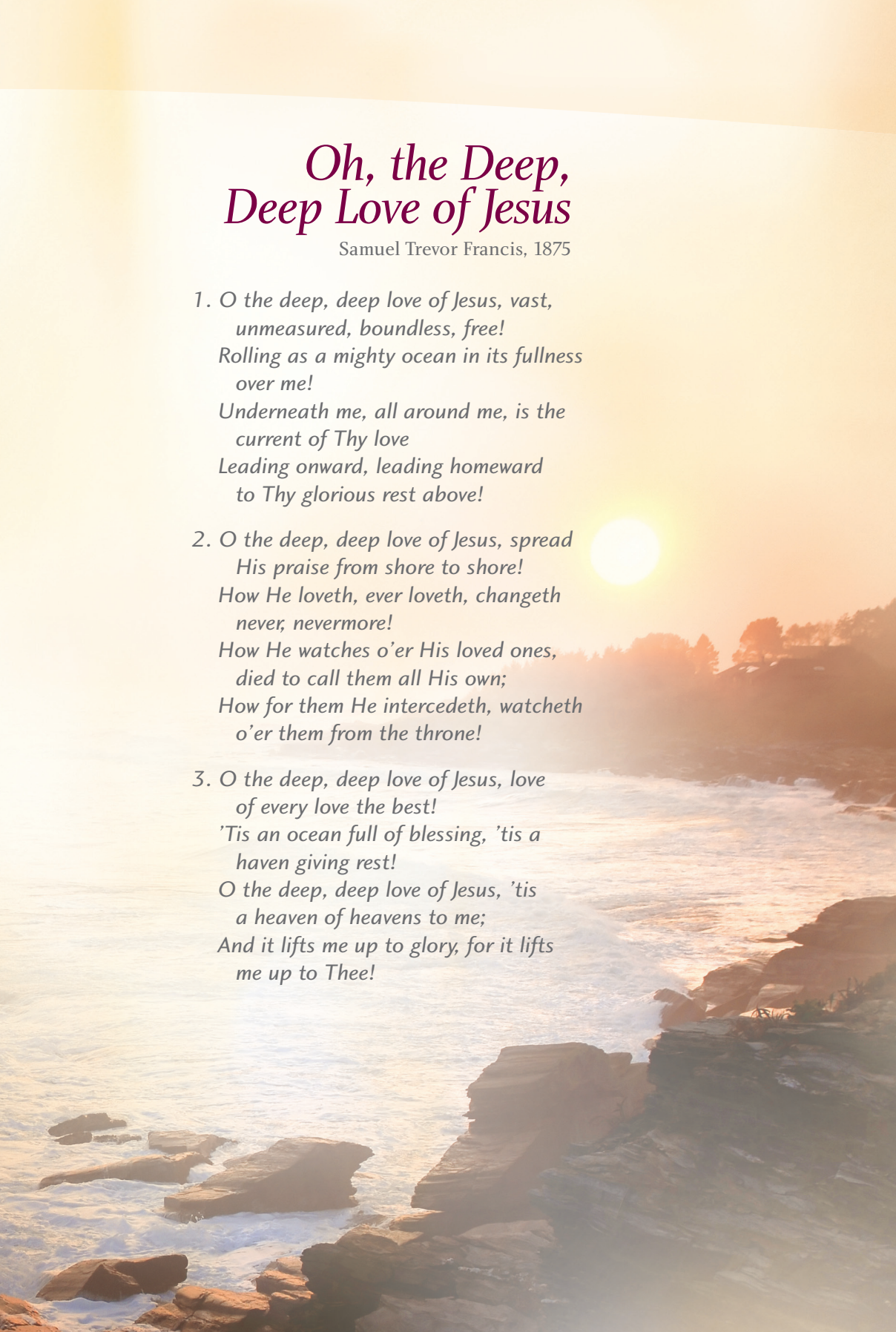
Oh, the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

Samuel Trevor Francis, 1875

1. O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast,
unmeasured, boundless, free!
Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness
over me!
Underneath me, all around me, is the
current of Thy love
Leading onward, leading homeward
to Thy glorious rest above!

2. O the deep, deep love of Jesus, spread
His praise from shore to shore!
How He loveth, ever loveth, changeth
never, nevermore!
How He watches o'er His loved ones,
died to call them all His own;
How for them He intercedeth, watcheth
o'er them from the throne!

3. O the deep, deep love of Jesus, love
of every love the best!
'Tis an ocean full of blessing, 'tis a
haven giving rest!
O the deep, deep love of Jesus, 'tis
a heaven of heavens to me;
And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts
me up to Thee!



Walk in Unity

4 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, [2]with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, [3]endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. [4]*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; [5]one Lord, one faith, one baptism; [6]one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you[a] all.

Spiritual Gifts

[7]But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. [8]Therefore He says:

"When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men."[a]

[9](Now this, *"He ascended"*—what does it mean but that He also first[a] descended into the lower parts of the earth? [10]He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

[11]And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, [12]for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, [13]till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; [14]that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, [15]but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— [16]from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

The New Man

[17]This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of[a] the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, [18]having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; [19]who, being past feeling, have given

4:6 [a]NU-Text omits *you*; M-Text reads *us*. **4:8** [a]Psalm 68:18
4:9 [a]NU-Text omits *first*. **4:17** [a]NU-Text omits *the rest of*.



ANN DOWNING • Homecoming Artist, Formerly of *The Downings* and *The Speers*

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height. | EPHESIANS 3:17, 18

Some of us haven't been rooted, grounded, or established in love; in fact, for many, *love* isn't a word of comfort but generates instead conflicting emotions that distort the meaning of the word and brings confusion. How precious to know that when we get a glimpse of His love for us and become settled in that love, we can truly know the freedom and joy of belonging and resting in His security, and then be able to love and accept healthy love.

themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20But you have not so learned Christ,
21if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,
23and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Do Not Grieve the Spirit

25Therefore, putting away lying, *"Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,"*[a] for we are members of one another. 26 *"Be angry, and do not sin"*:[a] do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27nor give place to the devil. 28Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Walk in Love

5 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

3But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5For this you know,[a] that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the

4:25 [a]Zechariah 8:16 **4:26** [a]Psalm 4:4 **5:5** [a]NU-Text reads *For know this.*

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

EPHESIANS 4:1–6

No two human beings can agree on everything—maybe on anything—for long. This is why we must become new creatures in Christ Jesus. When He makes us one body, our different functions as a part of that body become a function for one *purpose*. It is the purpose, not the personality, that changes. The whole body is controlled by the nerve center, the head. God is the brain of the body. We don't control each other either, unless one part is paralyzed for a time; stroke victims need the good arm to pick up the paralyzed arm—place it in the lap, move it on the pillow—but the whole body is exercising the whole time for one purpose: to get the arm well and responding again to the brain center, to fix any disconnect. We are one in the body of Christ not by a human agreement but by a divine transformation.

wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7Therefore do not be partakers with them.

Walk in Light

8For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9(for the fruit of the Spirit[a] *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them.* 12For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13But all things that are exposed are made

5:9 [a]NU-Text reads *light.*



DONY McGUIRE • Homecoming Artist, Songwriter, Music Minister, Married to Reba Rambo-McGuire

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. | EPHESIANS 4:7–12

This passage of Scripture was brought to a new light in my life several years ago when my son Israel was about two years old. I came home early from the office with pocketfuls of treats for all of my children. The girls were ecstatic over theirs and began running through the house screaming with delight. On the other hand, Israel was quite disturbed at his treat and basically dropped it on the floor and waddled off in his diaper, disappointed in the gift I offered him. Thoroughly frustrated, I took off after him, but then I felt a hand on my shoulder and the Voice whispered to me, "Before you address him and the way he treated the gift you gave him, let Me address the way you've treated the gifts I've given to you."

Needless to say, Israel wasn't the one who got the loving correction that only the Father can give. I did. And here's what I've come to understand: the amount of grace God is more than willing to pour out is in direct proportion to the way I receive the gifts He's given to me.

How willing am I to receive His wondrous gifts in my spouse, family, friends, and in all people He has sovereignly joined to my life? Unless I recognize His powerful, instructive gifts in apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, how can I fully receive and comprehend His gift of grace to me?

Maybe verse 7 could be paraphrased like this: Yet God's unmerited favor was given to each of us in proportion to the measure of our acceptance of Christ's rich and bounteous gifts.

manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. [14]Therefore He says:

"Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light."

Walk in Wisdom

[15]See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, [16]redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

[17]Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. [18]And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, [19]speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, [20]giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [21]submitting to one another in the fear of God.[a]

. . . speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord . . .

EPHESIANS 5:19

Marriage—Christ and the Church

[22]Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23]For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. [24]Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

[25]Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, [26]that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, [27]that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. [28]So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. [29]For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes

5:21 [a]NU-Text reads *Christ*.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ also forgave you.

EPHESIANS 4:32

How I love the old lyric by Fanny Crosby:

Down in the human heart,
crushed by the tempter
feelings lie buried that grace can restore—
Plead with them earnestly,
Plead with them guilty;
Chords that were broken can vibrate
once more.

—"Rescue the Perishing"

The world is dying for words of kindness. Gentleness is a lost art. From the time children learn to walk, someone close to them is bound to be toughening them up. In school, not only other children, but coaches and teachers alike often establish a pecking order that confirms the strong and tough and devours those who are gentle. But God's pecking order is counter to the world's. Gentleness and kindness, mercy and peaceableness are high on His scale of necessary qualities. Tough, brittle Christians are not what our loving Father is trying to produce.



MUSIC: A LESSON IN *Harmony*

Music is so much a part of all that brings us joy, like gathering around a piano somewhere to sing in harmony the songs that renew the commitments made to God, to each other, and to our great country or sit around the campfires with a guitar or autoharp and teach parts to the children the favorites you first sang as a kid.

We believe there is an important reason—even a theological one—we must sing in harmony, whether in families or in the family of God: we are not *one* because of our consensus, but because of our commitment. Indeed, we are so different and have so many viewpoints it's hard to get a consensus at the dinner table let alone in the church or in the broader community of believers. No, we are not one because of our *consensus*, but because of our *commitment* to something bigger than our individual opinions. It is our commitment to God and thus to each other as necessary parts of His body that makes us one. We each bring our unique identities in Him and join our voices in expressing our allegiance to Him. Amazingly what results is beautiful harmony but one song. Oh, sometimes for a line or two we may sing in unison to emphasize some major statement, but mostly it is our very diversity that God uses to make *His* music.

Let's gather the children, the young people, the patriarchs and the matriarchs, the newcomers and veterans and sing our hearts out the messages that define our identities in Him, in harmony.

And there's nothing better for singing our roots than the hymns that have outlived us all, surviving trends and fads, good times and hard times. Great hymns have been tried in the fires of human experience and have emerged true. Let's pass these pure gold gifts on to our children so that when life drops them into water over their heads, these bits of portable theology, these truths wrapped in music will be a lifeline when they're needing one in the worst way.

it, just as the Lord *does* the church. 30For we are members of His body,[a] of His flesh and of His bones. 31 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."*[a] 32This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 *"Honor your father and mother,"* which is the first commandment with promise: 3 *"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."*[a]

4And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Bondservants and Masters

5Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

9And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also[a] is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

The Whole Armor of God

10Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,[a] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13Therefore take up the whole armor of

5:30 [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **5:31** [a]Genesis 2:24
6:3 [a]Deuteronomy 5:16 **6:9** [a]NU-Text reads *He who is both their Master and yours.* **6:12** [a]NU-Text reads *rulers of this darkness.*

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.
EPHESIANS 5:11

What we embrace in the sanctuary places of our hearts, what we protect in the secret places of our minds, will determine our victory or defeat. When what is unclean is exposed to the light, it will shrivel and die—it does not grow in the light. Like fungus or mold (no roots, no nutrition for the spirit), evil needs the moist, dark places to live and multiply. But goodness and right thrive in the light. When we let God's Word enter the inner sanctuary, the beauty grows and blooms. When we expose what we've embraced in the inner sanctuary that is good, it takes root in others as well and brings life and hope.



God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

A Gracious Greeting

21 But that you also may know my affairs *and* how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; 22 whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and *that* he may comfort your hearts.

23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.



TANYA GOODMAN SYKES • Homecoming Artist, Soloist, Daughter of Rusty Goodman, Niece of Vestal and Howard Goodman

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. | EPHESIANS 6:12

As we navigate the waters of relationship with our family or friends, rough seas are inevitable. Regardless of how much we love one another, we are going to disagree, and sometimes *quite* strongly! I've known this scripture all my life but a few years ago, I was given new illumination on this passage in a really practical way.

Satan desires to destroy us in any way he can. Some of the more obvious worldly temptations may be easy for us to resist. But if he can turn families, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ against one another through hurts and anger, then he counts that as a victory.

Now, when I feel my frustration rising because of some offense, I try to realize that I'm not at war with my spouse, neighbor, sister, daughter, or whomever. The real battle is against the prince of darkness who wants to rob us of everything good, including our relationships. And guess what—I'm just not falling for it!

Second Corinthians 4:7 says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us." We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

Philippians

Greeting

1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops[a] and deacons:

[2]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thankfulness and Prayer

[3]I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, [4]always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, [5]for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, [6]being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ; [7]just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. [8]For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

[9]And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, [10]that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, [11]being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Christ Is Preached

[12]But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, [13]so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; [14]and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

[15]Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: [16]The former[a] preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; [17]but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. [18]What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

To Live Is Christ

[19]For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [20]according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. [21]For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. [22]But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. [23]For[a] I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. [24]Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. [25]And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, [26]that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

Striving and Suffering for Christ

[27]Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, [28]and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is

1:1 [a]Literally *overseers* **1:16** [a]NU-Text reverses the contents of verses 16 and 17. **1:23** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *But*.

to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation,[a] and that from God. [29]For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, [30]having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me.

Unity Through Humility

2 Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, [2]fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. [3]*Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. [4]Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

The Humbled and Exalted Christ

[5]Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, [6]who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, [7]but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. [8]And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. [9]Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, [10]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, [11]and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Light Bearers

[12]Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

1:28 [a]NU-Text reads *of your salvation.*



JASON CLARK • Homecoming Artist, *The Nelons*

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. . . . Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. | PHILIPPIANS 2:3, 5–8

We live in a society that spends great effort and resources to promote self-esteem. This is the theme of many talk shows, magazine articles, books, blogs, speeches, songs, and more. I think it is important to have confidence and even feel good about oneself, but we must keep this in scriptural perspective. When we look at the life of Christ we see a life devoted to humble service and sacrifice, a life that contradicts the modern society-coined phrase *self-esteem*. Rather, Jesus' life is a picture of self*less*-esteem.

Here is what I mean. Christ was perfect. He had no flaws; He never sinned! He was talked about, ridiculed, scorned to shame. Lies were told to defame His reputation. He was forsaken by friends, unlawfully sentenced, brutally beaten, and then ultimately murdered! But He never sinned!

[13]for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

[14]Do all things without complaining and disputing, [15]that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, [16]holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

[17]Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. [18]For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

Timothy Commended

[19]But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. [20]For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. [21]For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. [22]But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel. [23]Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. [24]But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

Epaphroditus Praised

[25]Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; [26]since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. [27]For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. [28]Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. [29]Receive him

Through all of the false accusations and mental and physical torment, Jesus kept His mind fixed on being a servant rather than the one served. If anyone had a reason to retaliate in defense, Jesus did. If anyone had the right to flaunt a reputation, it would be the sinless Son of God, but He "made himself of no reputation." This example has really helped me when I've faced times of ridicule or maybe a bit of gossip has been floating around with my name attached to it. Our first reaction to these hurtful experiences in life is to stand up and retaliate in hopes of defending our reputation. But look at what Jesus did. Though he was equal with God, He stooped down to humble Himself, serving in obedience even unto death by a cross.

I've learned that true humility is not thinking negatively about ourselves, but it is agreeing with what God says about us. The grace of God will exalt us without inflating us and will humble us without debasing us.

So, if you are suffering because you have been forsaken by friends or someone has told a lie about you that is damaging to your reputation, remember this, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

He will empower us to live a life of self*less*-esteem.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

PHILIPPIANS 2:9–11

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" was first published anonymously by editor Augustus Toplady in *Gospel Magazine* under the title "On the Resurrection, the Lord is King." Several years later an Anglican pastor named Edward Perronet was given credit for the popular hymn. It remains to be seen just how Toplady got a hold of the song in the first place, but the two men did share at least one thing in common: they were both at odds with John and Charles Wesley (see p. 116). Whereas Augustus Toplady stood in opposition with the founders of Methodism from the get-go on issues of theology, Perronet had actually been their partner in ministry earlier in his life.

In his early adulthood, Perronet traveled throughout England with the Wesley brothers as they preached the gospel of grace in the open air when persecution from their fellow Anglican pastors became too great and they were no longer welcome in local churches. Their persecution became so severe that on at least one occasion, as John Wesley recorded in his journal, "Edward Perronet was thrown down and rolled in mud and mire. Stones were hurled and windows broken." With the Wesleys, Perronet got a taste of what the apostle Paul faced as he spread the Good News thousands of years earlier. And like Paul and some of his partners in ministry, Edward Perronet and John and Charles Wesley didn't always see eye to eye. Eventually they parted ways when Perronet disagreed with them on some of their church policies.

But the beauty of the gospel is that their story doesn't end there. No matter the conflicts we have here on earth with other believers, we can be sure that in heaven we'll all be on the same page as the perfectly unified body of Christ with only one task: praising God. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul instructs the believers, "Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (2:2). And then he explains to them how to do that: model Christ's humility—the humility required for Him to stoop to becoming human and to suffer and die on the Cross. All of this leads to the culmination of creation: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (vv. 10, 11).

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name

Edward Perronet | 1779

1. All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all.
Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all.

2. Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him Who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all!

3. Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all!

4. Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!

therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; [30]because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

All for Christ

3 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you *is* not tedious, but for you *it is* safe.

[2]Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! [3]For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit,[a] rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, [4]though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: [5]circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; [6]concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

[7]But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. [8]Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ [9]and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; [10]that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, [11]if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Pressing Toward the Goal

[12]Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. [13]Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended;

3:3 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *who worship in the Spirit of God.*



AARON WILBURN • Songwriter, Humorist, Homecoming Artist

For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. | PHILIPPIANS 2:13

There are so many scriptures that bring peace to me, others that encourage me to face a new day after leaving a bad one behind—there seem to be words of grace for every situation I face. With all that in mind, I suppose some of the greatest comfort I find is in knowing there is a promise that God will take my greatest inconveniences, suffering, and weakness and make good work of it.

Paul, upon reflecting on his hardships, beatings, suffering not only at the hands of strangers but also those around him who should have been his friends, says in Philippians 1:12, "But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel." Later in Philippians 2:13 he writes, "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."

So I must believe this: the things that happen *to* me cause things to happen *in* me, in order for God to work *through* me. That is comfort when I need it most.

but one thing *I do,* forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, [14]I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

[15]Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. [16]Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule,[a] let us be of the same mind.

Our Citizenship in Heaven

[17]Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. [18]For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: [19]whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. [20]For our citizenship is in

3:16 [a]NU-Text omits *rule* and the rest of the verse.



DALLAS HOLM • Songwriter, Soloist

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. | PHILIPPIANS 3:7

In 1979 I was working on an album titled *All That Matters*. In the midst of recording songs like "I've Never Seen the Righteous Forsaken," "Jesus Knows Your Hurt," and "A Broken Heart," I began to notice a very real struggle in singing, especially the high notes. For the next ten years or so I struggled continually to sing my own songs which I had always sung so effortlessly. There seemed to be no medical explanation, which only added to the frustration. Some nights I felt I sang so poorly I was embarrassed. I would ask God if maybe there was something else I could do.

When I quit focusing on my problem, I noticed something: the ministry increased. More people were being saved and many testified how the music had deeply impacted their lives. I realized that the scripture, "My strength is made perfect in weakness," had become a reality (2 Cor. 12:9). My loss was His gain. My inability translated to God's ability to do greater things. My voice has since been restored, but I've never forgotten the lesson learned. Paul writes to the Philippians, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ" (3:7)

What paradoxes are in God's economy! Die to live, lose to find, serve to be great. Gain is loss and loss is gain! Does any of this make sense? To the natural mind, no, but to the true believer it makes perfect sense because it's no longer us but Christ who lives in us. His ways are not our ways (Is. 55:8). The value system of the world prepares us for this life and quite frankly does a poor job of that. His value system prepares us for eternity, and this life is a brief classroom study period.

I Will Go On

I repent for moments I have spent
Recalling all the pain
And failures of my past.
I repent for dwelling on the things
Beyond my pow'r to change—
The chains that held me fast.

I give up the bitterness and hate
And blaming men and fate
For all my discontent.
The guilt and pain I empty from my cup,
So God can fill it up
With peace and sweet content.

I will go on—
My past I leave behind me,
I gladly take His mercy and His love.
He is joy and He is peace,
He is strength and sweet release,
I know He is and I am His,
I will go on.

I accept the promise of the dawn,
A place to build upon,
To make a brand new day.
I will begin convinced that Jesus lives,
Assured that He forgives
And that He's here to stay.

I will go on—
My past I leave behind me,
I gladly take His mercy and His love.
He is joy and He is peace,
He is strength and sweet release,
I know He is and I am His,
I will go on.

Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 3:13, 14

"I Will Go On" is one of the most encouraging songs we've ever written. It is also one of the most discouraging, and I must say it was far easier to write than it is to live out. It is encouraging because it reminds us over and over to get the hard stuff into perspective, realign our worldview, and get the past behind us. It is one of the most discouraging, at least for me, because about the time I get to the place where I have put the past behind me on one issue in my life, repented of my attitude of resentment, self-deprecating regret, or paralyzing discouragement, and asked God to help me refocus on Him and the future and surrender to the upward pull of His grace, some new life tsunami sweeps into my life.

Perhaps that is why confession, repentance, trust in, and reliance on the work God has done (and not on our own abilities), gratitude and praise, and active compassion for others are all so essential to the ongoing faith lives of believers.

"I Will Go On" is one of our favorites of the songs Bill and I have written. We have found that it is so basic to a healthy spiritual life to keep on forgiving not only others, but ourselves as well. It is so necessary to have the courage to admit it when we are less than gracious, to let go of bitterness and regret before it takes root, to embrace hope, both for ourselves and for those around us, and to choose to turn and face forward, as Paul said, "toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

Counselors tell us that this song is not only good theology but good psychology. Baggage from the past

can shut down our futures. Grudges and resentment can sabotage the good relationships just waiting to be realized. Authorities say that kids who grow up around scorekeeping and getting even, or who hear their parents stewing on injustices (when has life been fair?), learn to come at life with their fists doubled up, ready to take on the first persons who cross their paths. From there it just becomes a matter of bigger weapons: fists, sticks, clubs, guns, bombs . . . until the whole earth becomes encampments of bullies, lying in wait to blow up the planet.

The cup of life holds only so much. In order to fill it with love, joy, peace, contentment, goodness, and progress, it must first be emptied of anger, blame, resentment, bitterness, grudges, and negative energies. It's up to us. The great news is that God promises to empower us for right living the minute we admit our failures and embrace His perfect work in us.



TaRANDA GREENE • Homecoming Artist, Formerly with *The Greenes*

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. | PHILIPPIANS 3:13, 14

I *love* Oreos!
I *hate* treadmills!

But my love for Oreos causes me to need to be on the treadmill every day. I don't walk because it is fun or easy. It is neither. But every day I do walk. The first five minutes or so is easy, but then I need to turn up the speed. After about forty minutes my muscles start to burn and hurt. It is then I have to make a decision: do I keep walking or do I just hit the stop button and quit?

The same is true in life. When the pain comes it would be easy to stop, complaining that developing endurance is just too hard! Sometimes I may have to slow down a bit, pause, take a deep breath, and refocus, but if I want to become strong I must keep walking. I know that if I quit now I will never reach the goal.

heaven, from which we also eagerly wait
for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21]who
will transform our lowly body that it may be
conformed to His glorious body, according
to the working by which He is able even to
subdue all things to Himself.

4 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for
brethren, my joy and crown, so stand
fast in the Lord, beloved.

Be United, Joyful, and in Prayer

[2]I implore Euodia and I implore
Syntyche to be of the same mind in the
Lord. [3]And[a] I urge you also, true compan-
ion, help these women who labored with
me in the gospel, with Clement also, and
the rest of my fellow workers, whose names
are in the Book of Life.

[4]Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will
say, rejoice!

[5]Let your gentleness be known to all
men. The Lord *is* at hand.

[6]Be anxious for nothing, but in every-
thing by prayer and supplication, with
thanksgiving, let your requests be made
known to God; [7]and the peace of God, which
surpasses all understanding, will guard your
hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Meditate on These Things

[8]Finally, brethren, whatever things are
true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever
things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure,
whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things
are of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if
there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on
these things. [9]The things which you learned
and received and heard and saw in me, these
do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippian Generosity

[10]But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that
now at last your care for me has flourished

4:3 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Yes*.

While I was holding my dying husband's head, my friend said to me, "This is when we discover whether we believe or we don't." At that point I made up my mind: *I can never hit the stop button!* Every day I have to renew that decision. I do it for my girls. I change the doll clothes, walk the dog, whatever it takes to get me through the day, but I must keep walking! When it is Christmas and I am alone assembling the Santa toys (there's nothing really new about that, except now I have to hold the flashlight for myself), I will remember that life is still life. It is just different.

I take the puppy to the groomer and the groomer asks, "Where is Daddy Greene?" For the first time I hear myself say, "He passed away." Alone, without her daddy, I take my daughter to her first day of school. I remind myself that God promises that He will not put more on us than we can bear, but He does at times put more on us than we can bear without Him. He wants our pain to bring us to Him. When the pain and the burn become more than we think we can handle, it makes me look at the quit button. But I know I cannot hit it. I must hit my knees instead, and tell Him I cannot continue walking without His help. Could it be that is just what He wants, to persevere by depending upon Him? That stabbing pain in my side cannot bring me down; it will just make me stand on His Word.

again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. [11]Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: [12]I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. [13]I can do all things through Christ[a] who strengthens me.

[14]Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. [15]Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. [16]For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. [17]Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. [18]Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. [19]And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. [20]Now to our God and Father *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

Music, the greatest good that mortals know, and all of heaven we have below.

JOSEPH ADDISON

Greeting and Blessing

[21]Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. [22]All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

[23]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.[a] Amen.

4:13 [a]NU-Text reads *Him who.* **4:23** [a]NU-Text reads *your spirit.*



JOY GARDNER • Homecoming Artist, Arranger and Soloist for *Christ Church Choir*, Formerly with *The Downings*

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. | PHILIPPIANS 4:6, 7

So many times life is filled with struggles, worries, inadequacies, rejections, disappointments, and pain. Through these difficult times, seeking answers to unresolved questions can become overwhelming. The stress of what decisions to make about even the next step forward can drain us of our hope, faith, and joy. But I have continually found refuge and confidence when I focus my thoughts on God's Word, and my heart is re-tuned to His Presence by devoting time in prayer. In these, prayer and the Word, I find the strength I need to press on. Sometimes I feel so weak. I may only be able to say, "God, keep my mind and heart through this next second, this next minute, this next hour, this next day." But His sweet peace that transcends all understanding comes. The fourth chapter of Philippians has been my point of reference through many dark days. Paul's instructions have brought me the encouragement needed to get me back on track to asking God for what I need and trusting and praising Him in *everything*.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

Colossians



Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colosse:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.[a]

Their Faith in Christ

3We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6which has come to you, as *it has* also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit,[a] as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; 7as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

Preeminence of Christ

9For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him,* being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14in whom we have redemption through His blood,[a] the forgiveness of sins.

15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Reconciled in Christ

19For it pleased *the Father that* in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

21And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— 23if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Sacrificial Service for Christ

24I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, 25of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from

1:2 [a]NU-Text omits *and the Lord Jesus Christ.* **1:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *and growing.* **1:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *through His blood.*

Unshakable Kingdom

They came to follow Him,
Drawn by what He promised them
If they would sell all that they had;
He said that God would send
A kingdom that would never end
Where all the poor would be rich.
And in their discontent
They heard what they thought He meant—
Heard that the weak would be strong,
Bread would be multiplied,
Hunger be satisfied
And every servant as a king.
But He went His quiet way,
Giving Himself away,
Building what eyes could never see.
While men looked for crowns and thrones,
He walked with crowds, alone,
Planting a seed in you and me—
Crying for those who cried,
Dying for those who died,
Bursting forth, glorified! Alive!
Yet some of them looked for Him,
Sad that it had to end,
But some dared to look within and see
The kingdom of God, a kingdom that would never end . . .
The living, unshakable kingdom of God!

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

COLOSSIANS 1:13, 14

The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.

LUKE 17:20, 21

December 28 is Holy Innocents Day, the day set aside to remember the infants slaughtered by King Herod in an effort to kill Jesus, the prophesied King of kings. The "crime" for which these babies were put to death? They seemed to pose a threat to Herod's way of life: his throne, his power, and the deeply entrenched economic system.

Could it be that we live in a culture of Herods? These days we hear a lot about personal empowerment and "looking out for number one." We are told that we must take control of our own lives, that we are the monarchs of our own destinies. What a terrifying thought! The very idea of supremacy over circumstances mandates that other kings must die, that we may eliminate anything or anyone in the way of our control. Herod's example taught us that the hunger and thirst for supremacy demands that other kings, other lords must go.

A declaration of ultimate control is a declaration of war on others who might challenge that control. Children, babies born or unborn, husbands, wives, neighbors, aging parents: none of these must challenge our personal kingship if we are lords of our own destinies, masters of our own circumstances. No wonder that

as our society seeks more personal autonomy, we have more crime, more violence, more aggressive behavior, more abuse.

And how ironic that the baby who slipped through Herod's grasp and into Egypt came back riding into Jerusalem on a donkey proclaiming a kingdom established in the hearts of believers who were called to become as little children. This kingdom of children would haunt the sleep of every Herod to come until the end of time. How ironic that this manger-child survivor would declare losing to be winning, and sacrifice to be the path to resurrection.

How ironic that even those who shouted "Hosanna" and ate multiplied bread and fish on the hillside were so easily persuaded to cry "Crucify!" No wonder those who chased this Jesus with crowns and scepters and plans to force Him to greatness were the ones left holding their purple robes and golden scepters and bags of silver while He slipped away to a gnarled garden and a rugged cross to teach us what kingship is really all about.

And how ironic that both the ones who had walked with Him and the soldiers who guarded His tomb slept that Easter morning when His sealed tomb became so pregnant with glory that it burst wide open, expelling this Jesus like a newborn from the womb.

And they missed it when He gathered His friends in a circle to dance and party around a campfire at the beach, then was taken into a cloud to return to His Father, like a child caught up with angels in a dream.

And ever since that day, those who have let His Word lodge in the fertile wombs of their hearts have celebrated Holy Innocents Day with joy and longing for the revelation of an ancient kingdom that will never end.



God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, [26]the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. [27]To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which[a] is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [28]Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. [29]To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Not Philosophy but Christ

2 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, [2]that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and[a] of Christ, [3]in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

[4]Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. [5]For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good* order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

[6]As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, [7]rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it[a] with thanksgiving.

[8]Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. [9]For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; [10]and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

Not Legalism but Christ

[11]In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins[a] of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, [12]buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. [13]And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, [14]having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. [15]Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

[16]So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, [17]which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. [18]Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not[a] seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, [19]and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

[20]Therefore,[a] if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—[21]"Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," [22]which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? [23]These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Not Carnality but Christ

3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. [2]Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. [3]For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4]When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

[5]Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. [6]Because of these things the wrath of God is coming

1:27 [a]M-Text reads *who*. **2:2** [a]NU-Text omits *both of the Father and*. **2:7** [a]NU-Text omits *in it*. **2:11** [a]NU-Text omits *of the sins*. **2:18** [a]NU-Text omits *not*. **2:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Therefore*.

upon the sons of disobedience, [7]in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

[8]But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. [9]Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, [10]and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, [11]where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

COLOSSIANS 3:16

Character of the New Man

[12]Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; [13]bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do.* [14]But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. [15]And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. [16]Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. [17]And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

The Christian Home

[18]Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

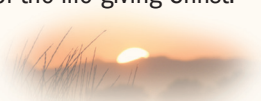
[19]Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

[20]Children, obey your parents in all

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

COLOSSIANS 3:16

Praise and worship are always a result, never a cause. When Christ dwells in our hearts richly, we can't help but sing encouragement to others and joyful praise to God. The deep, abiding relationship with the living God results in fruit—the fruit of praise and thanksgiving to His name. When the light and the truth of God changes us in any way—salvation, forgiveness, sanctification, the filling of the Holy Spirit, healing, abiding joy—the result is praise, and in that resulting praise God finds a welcome place to move into and onto new areas where we need His transforming power. Praise postures and expressions when there has been no deep work is a farce. Praising God to get his presence is cheap manipulation. He will let us go on in our praise-trances, but He will not find habitation there and we will leave such "praise services" feeling as empty as a diner who has bypassed the vegetables and meat and gorged himself on the empty calories of rich desserts. And, eventually, we will starve for lack of the life-giving Christ.



things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
21 Fathers, do not provoke your children,
lest they become discouraged.
22 Bondservants, obey in all things your
masters according to the flesh, not with
eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincer-
ity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever
you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and
not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord
you will receive the reward of the inheri-
tance; for[a] you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But
he who does wrong will be repaid for what
he has done, and there is no partiality.
4 Masters, give your bondservants what
is just and fair, knowing that you also
have a Master in heaven.

Christian Graces

2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being
vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3 mean-
while praying also for us, that God would
open to us a door for the word, to speak
the mystery of Christ, for which I am also
in chains, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I
ought to speak.
5 Walk in wisdom toward those *who are*
outside, redeeming the time. 6 *Let* your
speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with
salt, that you may know how you ought to
answer each one.

Final Greetings

7 Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful
minister, and fellow servant in the Lord,
will tell you all the news about me. 8 I am
sending him to you for this very purpose,
that he[a] may know your circumstances
and comfort your hearts, 9 with Onesimus,
a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one*
of you. They will make known to you all
things which *are happening* here.
10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets
you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas
(about whom you received instructions: if
he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus
who is called Justus. These *are my* only fel-
low workers for the kingdom of God who
are of the circumcision; they have proved
to be a comfort to me.
12 Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondser-
vant of Christ, greets you, always laboring
fervently for you in prayers, that you may
stand perfect and complete[a] in all the will
of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he
has a great zeal[a] for you, and those who
are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.
14 Luke the beloved physician and Demas
greet you. 15 Greet the brethren who are in
Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church
that *is* in his[a] house.

Closing Exhortations and Blessing

16 Now when this epistle is read among
you, see that it is read also in the church
of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise
read the *epistle* from Laodicea. 17 And say
to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry
which you have received in the Lord, that
you may fulfill it."
18 This salutation by my own hand—
Paul. Remember my chains. Grace *be* with
you. Amen.

3:24 [a]NU-Text omits *for.* **4:8** [a]NU-Text reads *you may know our circumstances and he may.* **4:12** [a]NU-Text reads *fully assured.* **4:13** [a]NU-Text reads *concern.* **4:15** [a]NU-Text reads *Nympha . . . her house.*

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

Thessalonians



Greeting

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.[a]

Their Good Example

[2]We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, [3]remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, [4]knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. [5]For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

[6]And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, [7]so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. [8]For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. [9]For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, [10]and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Paul's Conduct

2 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. [2]But even[a] after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. [3]For our exhortation *did* not *come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit.

[4]But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. [5]For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God *is* witness. [6]Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. [7]But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. [8]So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. [9]For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

[10]You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; [11]as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged[a] every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, [12]that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Their Conversion

[13]For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. [14]For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in

1:1 [a]NU-Text omits *from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* **2:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *even.* **2:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *implored.*

Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, [15]who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, [16]forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

Longing to See Them

[17]But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. [18]Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. [19]For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? [20]For you are our glory and joy.

Concern for Their Faith

3 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, [2]and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, [3]that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. [4]For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. [5]For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

Encouraged by Timothy

[6]But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to see* you—[7]therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. [8]For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

[9]For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which

The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:2–6

How often have we heard dire warnings and dark forebodings about the coming of Christ and the judgment being "as a thief in the night"? How many Christians have lived in fear and anxiety, thinking of Christ coming without warning or catching them being less than perfect?

But this warning is not meant for those who love the Lord. They are not "in the night" and their master is not "a thief." He is an intimate and trusted friend who willingly reveals His very mind to those in His family, His children. He is light, so when we are walking with Him we always see where He and we are going. We do need to watch that our relationship with Him remains pure and connected. That's all we have to be concerned with. Anything that dulls our senses to Him and His joy is a distraction. Of course, we need to have our wits about us; of course we need to be sober! We don't want to miss anything in the sweet relationship that will one day deliver us into the very presence of the Lord.

we rejoice for your sake before our God,
10 night and day praying exceedingly that
we may see your face and perfect what is
lacking in your faith?

Prayer for the Church

11 Now may our God and Father
Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct
our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make
you increase and abound in love to one
another and to all, just as we *do* to you,
13 so that He may establish your hearts
blameless in holiness before our God and
Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus
Christ with all His saints.

Plea for Purity

4 Finally then, brethren, we urge and
exhort in the Lord Jesus that you
should abound more and more, just as you
received from us how you ought to walk
and to please God; 2 for you know what
commandments we gave you through the
Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, your sanc-
tification: that you should abstain from
sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should
know how to possess his own vessel in
sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion
of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know
God; 6 that no one should take advantage
of and defraud his brother in this matter,
because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such,
as we also forewarned you and testified.
7 For God did not call us to uncleanness,
but in holiness. 8 Therefore he who rejects
this does not reject man, but God, who has
also given[a] us His Holy Spirit.

4:8 [a]NU-Text reads *who also gives.*



DAVID TEEMS • Author, Formerly with *David Teems and the Calling*

Pray without ceasing. | 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17

The thought of doing anything without ceasing is a little overwhelming, especially something as consuming as prayer can be, and in an age that demands so much of us. It engages the voice, the heart, the will, the mind, the body. But, as living things can be, prayer is also migratory; it moves with us, it settles upon us, outside awareness. The same prayer that puts words in our mouths also settles somewhere quietly, and at times unquietly, within us, in the recesses beyond the reach of thought. It has life within and beyond us.

Because of this, it is possible for life itself to take on the nature of prayer, outside action or intent, outside the need for speech; our very life becomes the offering we make, continuous, without end, substantial—our thanksgiving, our praise, our petitions—all outside the spoil of words and all within the immense jurisdiction of his love.

He knows our need before we do, while it is still mute and shapeless.

A Brotherly and Orderly Life

[9]But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; [10]and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; [11]that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, [12]that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

The Comfort of Christ's Coming

[13]But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. [14]For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.[a]

[15]For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. [16]For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17]Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [18]Therefore comfort one another with these words.

The Day of the Lord

5 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. [2]For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. [3]For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. [4]But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. [5]You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. [6]Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do,* but let us watch and be sober. [7]For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. [8]But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. [9]For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10]who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

[11]Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Various Exhortations

[12]And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, [13]and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

I am strongly persuaded that after theology there is no art than can be placed on a level with music; for besides theology, music is the only art capable of affording peace and joy of the heart.

MARTIN LUTHER

4:14 [a]Or *those who through Jesus sleep*

[14]Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the faint-hearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. [15]See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

[16]Rejoice always, [17]pray without ceasing, [18]in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

[19]Do not quench the Spirit. [20]Do not despise prophecies. [21]Test all things; hold fast what is good. [22]Abstain from every form of evil.

Blessing and Admonition

[23]Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. [24]He who calls you *is* faithful, who also will do *it*.

[25]Brethren, pray for us.

[26]Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

[27]I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy[a] brethren.

[28]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

5:27 [a]NU-Text omits *holy*.



MARK LOWRY • Homecoming Artist, the *Gaither Vocal Band*

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. | 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16–18

One of the questions I've been asked most by teenagers through the years is this: "How can I know the will of God?" I heard a preacher answer that question with this passage, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18. The will of God for you is that you "rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks." It does not say you have to be grateful *for* everything, just grateful *in* everything. There are some things we go through that we may never be grateful *for*. But we can always be grateful *in* every situation. Gratitude is a state of the heart. You can't stay miserable and be grateful. Eventually, you have to choose one or the other. And a grateful spirit shows in everything you do. Your face shows it. Your eyes show it. Your words speak it. And, yes, you can pray without ceasing, too. Obviously, you can't go around on your knees all day. But you can pray as you're doing almost anything, in your heart to God. So remember the will of God for you in Christ Jesus: Rejoice! Pray! Be Grateful!

I've got an attitude of gratitude,
A heart that's full and grateful.
Through the good and bad,
Happy or sad, dear Lord,
Help me always be thankful.

"Attitude of Gratitude" by Mark Lowry and Benjy Gaither © 2010

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

Thessalonians



Greeting

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

[2]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's Final Judgment and Glory

[3]We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, [4]so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, [5]*which is* manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; [6]since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, [7]and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, [8]in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9]These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, [10]when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe,[a] because our testimony among you was believed.

[11]Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power, [12]that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Great Apostasy

2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, [2]not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ[a] had come. [3]Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin[a] is revealed, the son of perdition, [4]who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God[a] in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

[5]Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? [6]And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. [7]For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He[a] who now restrains *will do so* until He[b] is taken out of the way. [8]And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. [9]The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, [10]and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. [11]And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, [12]that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Stand Fast

[13]But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning

---

1:10 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *have believed.* **2:2** [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord.* **2:3** [a]NU-Text reads *lawlessness.* **2:4** [a]NU-Text omits *as God.* **2:7** [a]Or *he* [b]Or *he*

chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, [14]to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. [15]Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

[16]Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, [17]comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Pray for Us

3 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, [2]and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

[3]But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. [4]And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

[5]Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Warning Against Idleness

[6]But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he[a] received from us. [7]For you

3:6 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *they.*



BILL GAITHER

But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. | 2 THESSALONIANS 3:13

My dad was a man of few words. Most of what he taught us kids was taught by example. Dad and I had the kind of relationship that did not require a lot of emotion or physical affection. I never once questioned his love for me—we just had an unspoken language.

He valued hard work and he passed that value down to Danny, Mary Ann, and me. In addition to his day job at General Motors, he always had a garden and raised cattle on our small family farm. As kids, part of our daily chores included a hike out to the water pump to fill the water trough for the animals.

When we were young, we had to take turns because the old hand pump would wear our arms out pretty quickly. But because pumping water was part of our daily routine, it got easier with time . . . or we got stronger.

The monotony of pumping water did not take much concentration, so often I would use that time for dreaming, or working out new ideas, or trying to figure things out. After I went to college, and even after I had a family of my own, whenever I was back at home I often found myself out back, pumping water. There was a kind of solace in the simplicity of the task when the rest of the world seemed to be getting more and more complicated.

yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; [8]nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, [9]not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

[10]For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. [11]For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. [12]Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

[13]But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good. [14]And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. [15]Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Heartless hymns are insults to heaven.
CHARLES SPURGEON

Benediction

[16]Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.

[17]The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

[18]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

About a year after Danny died of cancer, my mom was in the hospital and her health was declining. It was becoming evident to our entire family that Mom was probably not going to be coming home. One day, after Dad had been at the hospital with Mom all night long, I stopped by the hospital and asked him if he would like to go home and rest for a while. He nodded.

He rested in that quiet house for a little while, and then went to the grocery store to get a few things. When he got back, the house seemed particularly dreary without Mom, so I asked him if he would like to go out back and check on his garden. He did. But after he checked the garden, I saw him go around the side of the barn and stop. I waited for a moment, then went to check on him.

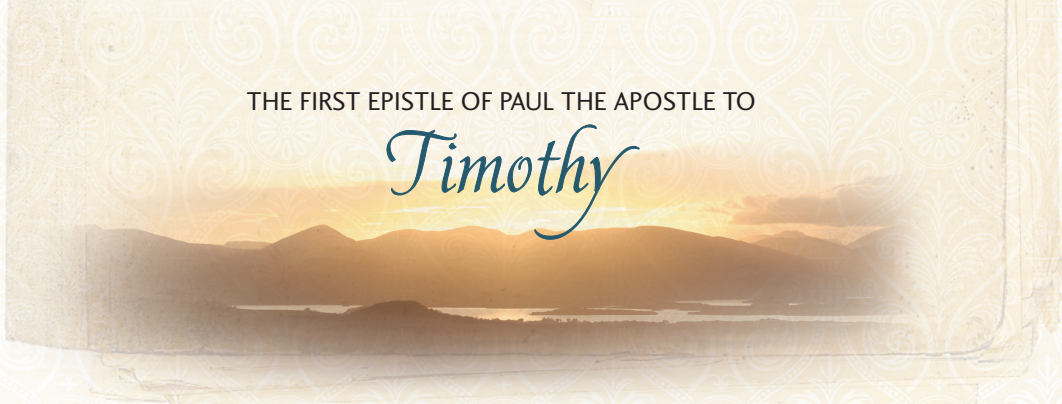
I'll never forget the memory of walking up behind my dad next to that old barn and seeing his shoulders shaking. I had only seen him cry once or twice in my life. I wanted him to know that it was okay to cry. He had just buried his son a year earlier, and he would soon be saying goodbye to his wife of sixty-seven years. So as I walked up behind him, I put my hands on his shoulders and said, "It's okay, Dad. This is tough."

He stood quietly for a moment, and then said something I'll never forget: "Wanna go pump some water?"

That memory of my dad reminds me often that when life gets tough, sometimes the only thing to do is to keep pumping. We can waste time asking, "Why me?" Or we can press on and live the life we have been given with the help of the One who gave it to us.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO

Timothy



Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,

[2]To Timothy, a true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

No Other Doctrine

[3]As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, [4]nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. [5]Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith, [6]from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, [7]desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

[8]But we know that the law *is* good if one uses it lawfully, [9]knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, [10]for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, [11]according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

Glory to God for His Grace

[12]And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, [13]although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. [14]And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. [15]This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. [16]However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. [17]Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise,[a] *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Fight the Good Fight

[18]This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, [19]having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, [20]of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

Pray for All Men

2 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, [2]for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. [3]For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, [4]who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. [5]For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, [6]who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, [7]for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I

1:17 [a]NU-Text reads *to the only God.*

am speaking the truth in Christ[a] *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Men and Women in the Church

[8]I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; [9]in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, [10]but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. [11]Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. [12]And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. [13]For Adam was formed first, then Eve. [14]And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. [15]Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Qualifications of Overseers

3 This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop,[a] he desires a good work. [2]A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; [3]not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,[a] but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; [4]one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence [5](for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); [6]not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil. [7]Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Qualifications of Deacons

[8]Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, [9]holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. [10]But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless. [11]Likewise, *their* wives *must be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. [12]Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. [13]For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The Great Mystery

[14]These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; [15]but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. [16]And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God[a] was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.

The Great Apostasy

4 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, [2]speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, [3]forbidding

2:7 [a]NU-Text omits *in Christ*. **3:1** [a]Literally *overseer* **3:3** [a]NU-Text omits *not greedy for money*. **3:16** [a]NU-Text reads *Who*.



Christ Jesus our Lord . . . has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly . . . an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

1 TIMOTHY 1:12–14

Any good thing we do—in order for it to count to God—must be a result of grace, of what Jesus did. Any good deed we do or any attitude we try to have in order to count with God is rubbish. Are Christians different from the unsaved? Yes, they should be. Do they act and love differently? Yes. Hopefully they do. But any good they exhibit must be a result of being melted clear down by love and grace and mercy. After that, all acts flow from a grateful, madly in love with Jesus heart. Any good acts without that are just as legalistic as rules are without love.



to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

A Good Servant of Jesus Christ

6If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 7But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach,[a] because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. 11These things command and teach.

Take Heed to Your Ministry

12Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit,[a] in faith, in purity. 13Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. 15Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 16Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Treatment of Church Members

5 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, 2older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.

Honor True Widows

3Honor widows who are really widows. 4But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for

4:10 [a]NU-Text reads *we labor and strive*. **4:12** [a]NU-Text omits *in spirit*.

this is good and[a] acceptable before God. [5]Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. [6]But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. [7]And these things command, that they may be blameless. [8]But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

[9]Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man, [10]well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

[11]But refuse *the* younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, [12]having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. [13]And besides they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. [14]Therefore I desire that *the* younger *widows* marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. [15]For some have already turned aside after Satan. [16]If any believing man or[a] woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

Honor the Elders

[17]Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. [18]For the Scripture says, *"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,"*[a] and, "The laborer *is* worthy of his wages."[b] [19]Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. [20]Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

[21]I charge *you* before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. [22]Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

[23]No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

[24]Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later. [25]Likewise, the good works *of some* are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

Honor Masters

6 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. [2]And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

Error and Greed

[3]If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, [4]he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, [5]useless wranglings[a] of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of* gain. From such withdraw yourself.[b]

[6]Now godliness with contentment is great gain. [7]For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain[a] we can carry nothing out. [8]And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. [9]But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. [10]For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The Good Confession

[11]But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. [12]Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called

5:4 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *good and*. **5:16** [a]NU-Text omits *man or*. **5:18** [a]Deuteronomy 25:4 [b]Luke 10:7 **6:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *constant friction*. [b]NU-Text omits this sentence. **6:7** [a]NU-Text omits *and it is certain*.

and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. [13]I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, [14]that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, [15]which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, [16]who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Instructions to the Rich

[17]Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

There is nothing in the world so much like prayer as music is.

WILLIAM P. MERRILL

[18]*Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, [19]storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Guard the Faith

[20]O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— [21]by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

Grace *be* with you. Amen.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO

Timothy



Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ[a] by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

[2]To Timothy, a beloved son:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Timothy's Faith and Heritage

[3]I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* forefathers *did*, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, [4]greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, [5]when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. [6]Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. [7]For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

[8]Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, [9]who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, [10]but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, [11]to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.[a] [12]For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Be Loyal to the Faith

[13]Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. [14]That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

[15]This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. [16]The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; [17]but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found *me*. [18]The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered *to me*[a] at Ephesus.

Be Strong in Grace

2 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. [2]And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. [3]You therefore must endure[a] hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. [4]No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. [5]And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. [6]The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. [7]Consider what I say, and may[a] the Lord give you understanding in all things.

[8]Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed

1:1 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Christ Jesus*. **1:11** [a]NU-Text omits *of the Gentiles*. **1:18** [a]*To me* is from the Vulgate and a few Greek manuscripts. **2:3** [a]NU-Text reads *You must share*. **2:7** [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord will give you*.

of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, [9]for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. [10]Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

[11]*This is* a faithful saying:

For if we died with *Him,*
We shall also live with *Him.*
[12] If we endure,
We shall also reign with *Him.*
If we deny *Him,*
He also will deny us.
[13] If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself.

Approved and Disapproved Workers

[14]Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive



TERRY BLACKWOOD • Homecoming Artist, Formerly with *The Imperials*

For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. | 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

For most of my formative years, I struggled with a serious case of shyness. That was so ironic, since my father, Doyle Blackwood, was the outgoing original emcee of The Blackwood Brothers Quartet. He was totally at ease in front of a crowd, and people loved him. I, on the other hand, really struggled with relaxing and just being myself—I suppose because of fear of failure—but in faith, I trusted God to help me. I started out small, in Sunday school classes, singing to small groups. Eventually, I had the courage to sing in a main church service and then on to featured soloist in our citywide Christmas and Easter musicals.

My first professional singing job came with the New Stamps Quartet, in which I sang the baritone with Big John Hall, Roger McDuff, Jim Hill, and "Smilin'" Joe Roper on piano. From there I joined The Imperials as lead singer, following the famous Jake Hess. Now, who would be foolish enough to try to follow Jake Hess? I discovered I didn't have to be as good as Jake. I had to just be the best Terry Blackwood I could be for the glory of God.

All the while, I kept the scripture 2 Timothy 1:7 in my memory. God didn't give me a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. Perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). Fear is the opposite of faith. I made a conscious decision to appropriate faith and conquer fear with God's help. So, remembering that if God is for me, who can be against me (Rom. 8:31), I trusted God to do what He promised He would do. I did my best, and He blessed it and multiplied it to touch the masses of people who needed to hear my songs. We are a team: He needs my participation in His plans, and I need His anointing to touch the people with His message. With God on your side, you can't lose!

about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. [15]Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. [16]But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. [17]And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, [18]who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. [19]Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ[a] depart from iniquity."

[20]But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. [21]Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. [22]Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. [23]But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. [24]And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, [25]in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, [26]and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the

2:19 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the Lord.*



MARK LOWRY • Homecoming Artist, the *Gaither Vocal Band*

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. | 2 TIMOTHY 3:1–4

In this list of sin, Paul is talking about how people will be in the last days. On this list of obvious sins is one Christians overlook sometimes. Especially those Christians who are prone to gossip—slanderers, Paul calls them. Paul said to turn away from those types of people. Don't listen to them. Get away!

My mother always said, "If you can't say something nice about someone, don't say anything at all." With our words we can speak life or we can speak death. We can speak grace or we can speak judgment. We can build destructive people up or we can tear them down. Gossip is an ugly sin. You should never trust a gossip. If someone tells you tales about someone else when that person is not in the room, that same gossip will be sharing your "testimony" as soon as you're not around. Don't trust them. If your particular sin *is* gossip, stop it! Instead, spread good gossip. For instance, if I hear Bill Gaither say something good about, let's say, Jeff Easter, while Jeff is not around, as soon as I see Jeff, I tell him what Bill said about him. You should see ol' Jeff's face light up. It's a lot more fun than spreading gossip that kills and destroys someone's reputation.

devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

Perilous Times and Perilous Men

3 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: [2]For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3]unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, [4]traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5]having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! [6]For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, [7]always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. [8]Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; [9]but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

The Man of God and the Word of God

[10]But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, [11]persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. [12]Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. [13]But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14]But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, [15]and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. | 2 TIMOTHY 4:7

Second Timothy is believed to be the last letter that the apostle Paul ever wrote. The year is approximately A.D. 66 and Paul is in Rome in prison. The Emperor Nero has as his objective the persecution and eventual annihilation of the Christians. Paul is old; his body is weary and worn. He is lonely. He realizes that Nero will persist in the persecution Paul has experienced since his conversion on the Damascus Road.

He writes to Timothy, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:6, 7). Paul fought the good fight, exercising the standards set forth by Jesus Christ. Paul never changed the rules to convenience himself in any way. He gave us an illustration that in competition an athlete can only win the cup if he complies strictly with the rules. He asks of Timothy, "Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and

A worship leader is not necessarily more "spiritual" than anyone else; he or she simply is willing to help a group of people reach a place of loving intimacy with God via music.

DON FRANCISCO

[16]All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, [17]that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Preach the Word

4 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at[a] His appearing and His kingdom: [2]Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. [3]For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; [4]and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. [5]But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul's Valedictory

[6]For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. [7]I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. [8]Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the

4:1 [a]NU-Text omits *therefore* and reads *and by* for *at*.

has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. . . . Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments. . . . At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me" (2 Tim. 4:9–11, 13, 16, 17). Paul finished his course.

This is not in the biblical account, but perhaps on that morning he marched to the execution ground. The executioner asked, "Old man, do you see this blade? With this blade we'll stop you from talking about this man called Jesus." Paul, looking through dimmed eyes, must have replied, "No, I don't see the blade, but I do see a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also who love His appearing" (paraphrase of 2 Tim. 4:8). Paul was beheaded in Rome in A.D. 67.

Remember, Jesus has already stood for you. Fight the good fight; keep the faith; finish the course. Say as Martin Luther said at the Diet of Worms, "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise, God help me. Amen."

Stand for Jesus when tempted by the enemy so there's never any question and all the world can see. Stand for Jesus and in your final hour you'll have testifying power. Stand for Jesus.

The solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
2 TIMOTHY 2:19

The "solid foundation of God" has two strong pillars anchored firmly to it: "The Lord knows those who are His," and "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." One pillar is what *God does* irrevocably for those that are His—He will always know us! The other is something *we will and must do* to keep up our part of this offered forever relationship: "depart from iniquity." The Lord knows, in the most internal sense, the way of those whose passion it is to be pure, right, loving and, most of all, *His!* As in all relationships, the embrace takes two sets of arms. Eye contact between lovers takes two sets of eyes. These two pillars on the solid foundation of God will hold up any life we need to build. Nothing is too elaborately complex or weighty to stress this structural base! Praise His name!



Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

The Abandoned Apostle

[9]Be diligent to come to me quickly; [10]for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. [11]Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. [12]And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. [13]Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

[14]Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. [15]You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

[16]At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

The Lord Is Faithful

[17]But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. [18]And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

Come Before Winter

[19]Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. [20]Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.

[21]Do your utmost to come before winter.

Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

Farewell

[22]The Lord Jesus Christ[a] be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

4:22 [a]NU-Text omits *Jesus Christ*.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO

Titus



Greeting

1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an
apostle of Jesus Christ, according to
the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with
godliness, [2]in hope of eternal life which
God, who cannot lie, promised before time
began, [3]but has in due time manifested
His word through preaching, which was
committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

[4]To Titus, a true son in *our* common
faith:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God
the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ[a] our
Savior.

Qualified Elders

[5]For this reason I left you in Crete, that
you should set in order the things that are
lacking, and appoint elders in every city as
I commanded you— [6]if a man is blameless,
the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or
insubordination. [7]For a bishop[a] must be
blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to
wine, not violent, not greedy for money, [8]but
hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, [9]holding
fast the faithful word as he has been taught,
that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both
to exhort and convict those who contradict.

The Elders' Task

[10]For there are many insubordinate,
both idle talkers and deceivers, especially
those of the circumcision, [11]whose mouths
must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought
not, for the sake of dishonest gain. [12]One of
them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans
are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
[13]This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke
them sharply, that they may be sound in
the faith, [14]not giving heed to Jewish fables
and commandments of men who turn from
the truth. [15]To the pure all things are pure,
but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind
and conscience are defiled. [16]They profess
to know God, but in works they deny *Him*,
being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Qualities of a Sound Church

2 But as for you, speak the things which
are proper for sound doctrine: [2]that
the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; [3]the
older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given
to much wine, teachers of good things—
[4]that they admonish the young women to
love their husbands, to love their children,
[5]*to be* discreet, chaste, homemakers, good,
obedient to their own husbands, that the
word of God may not be blasphemed.

[6]Likewise, exhort the young men to
be sober-minded, [7]in all things showing
yourself *to be* a pattern of good works;
in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence,
incorruptibility,[a] [8]sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an
opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.[a]

[9]*Exhort* bondservants to be obedient to
their own masters, to be well pleasing in all
things, not answering back, [10]not pilfering,
but showing all good fidelity, that they may
adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in
all things.

1:4 [a]NU-Text reads *and Christ Jesus.* **1:7** [a]Literally *overseer* **2:7** [a]NU-Text omits *incorruptibility.* **2:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *us.*

Trained by Saving Grace

11For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.

15Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Graces of the Heirs of Grace

3 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. 3For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Avoid Dissension

9But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. 10Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, 11knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Final Messages

12When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. 14And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

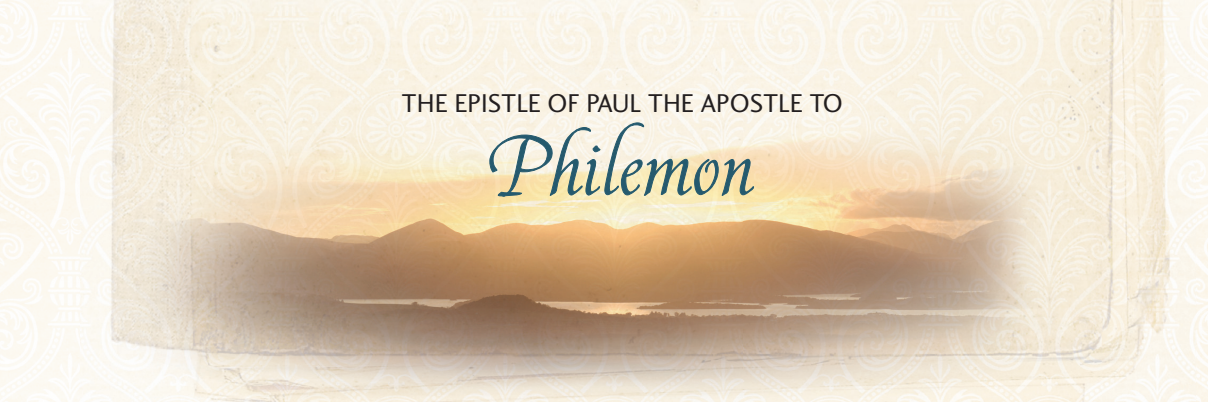
Farewell

15All who *are* with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO

Philemon



Greeting

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother,

To Philemon our beloved *friend* and fellow laborer, [2]to the beloved[a] Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

[3]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

[4]I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, [5]hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, [6]that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you[a] in Christ Jesus. [7]For we have[a] great joy[b] and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

The Plea for Onesimus

[8]Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, [9]*yet* for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ— [10]I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten *while* in my chains, [11]who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.

[12]I am sending him back.[a] You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, [13]whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel. [14]But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.

[15]For perhaps he departed for a while for this *purpose,* that you might receive him forever, [16]no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Philemon's Obedience Encouraged

[17]If then you count me as a partner, receive him as *you would* me. [18]But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. [19]I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides. [20]Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.

[21]Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. [22]But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.

Farewell

[23]Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, [24]*as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

[25]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

---

2 [a]NU-Text reads *to our sister Apphia.* **6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *us.* **7** [a]NU-Text reads *had.* [b]M-Text reads *thanksgiving.* **12** [a]NU-Text reads *back to you in person, that is, my own heart.*



Building Bridges

GLORIA GAITHER

Let's build a bridge where walls once stood;
I'd like to reach you if I could;
Stone by stone let's make it strong—
We've been apart for way too long.

You build from your bank, I from mine;
We'll reach each other in no time,
And when we do, there'll be a way
To make the crossing any day.

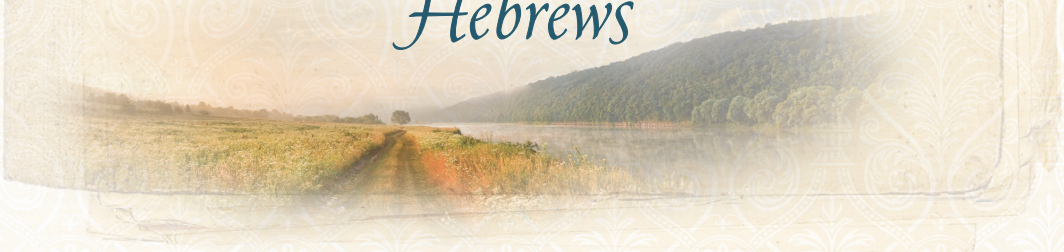
Let's throw a party on the bridge!
Let's sing and dance from ridge to ridge.
And let's invite those coming through
To stop and join the party, too.

We're free to sing in harmony—
God's love once built a bridge for me;
We are so loved that we can dare
To go build bridges everywhere!

Building bridges, building bridges—
Nothing can keep me from you.
Our Lord has crossed the great divide,
So we can go build bridges, too.

THE EPISTLE TO THE

Hebrews



God's Supreme Revelation

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the
fathers by the prophets, [2]has in these last
days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He
has appointed heir of all things, through
whom also He made the worlds; [3]who
being the brightness of *His* glory and the
express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power,
when He had by Himself[a] purged our[b] sins,
sat down at the right hand of the Majesty
on high, [4]having become so much better
than the angels, as He has by inheritance
obtained a more excellent name than they.

The Son Exalted Above Angels

[5]For to which of the angels did He ever
say:

"You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You"?[a]

And again:

"I will be to Him a Father,
And He shall be to Me a Son"?[b]

[6]But when He again brings the first-
born into the world, He says:

"Let all the angels of God worship Him."[a]

[7]And of the angels He says:

"Who makes His angels spirits
And His ministers a flame of fire."[a]

[8]But to the Son *He says:*

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness is the
scepter of Your kingdom.
[9] *You have loved righteousness and*
hated lawlessness;
Therefore God, Your God, has
anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than
Your companions."[a]

[10]And:

"You, LORD, in the beginning laid the
foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Your
hands.
[11] *They will perish, but You remain;*
And they will all grow old like a
garment;
[12] *Like a cloak You will fold them up,*
And they will be changed.
But You are the same,
And Your years will not fail."[a]

[13]But to which of the angels has He ever
said:

"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your
footstool"?[a]

[14]Are they not all ministering spirits sent
forth to minister for those who will inherit
salvation?

Do Not Neglect Salvation

2 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard,
lest we drift away. [2]For if the word spoken
through angels proved steadfast, and every
transgression and disobedience received
a just reward, [3]how shall we escape if we
neglect so great a salvation, which at the
first began to be spoken by the Lord, and
was confirmed to us by those who heard
Him, [4]God also bearing witness both with

1:3 [a]NU-Text omits *by Himself.* [b]NU-Text omits *our.* **1:5** [a]Psalm 2:7 [b]2 Samuel 7:14 **1:6** [a]Deuteronomy 32:43 (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scrolls); Psalm 97:7 **1:7** [a]Psalm 104:4 **1:9** [a]Psalm 45:6, 7 **1:12** [a]Psalm 102:25–27 **1:13** [a]Psalm 110:1

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

HEBREWS 2:14

The law had punishments. And the laws were so comprehensive no one could keep them all, so most of the time people lived in fear. But Jesus—oh, Jesus—without breaking or banishing the law, circumvented it, but at the same time satisfied justice by drawing a bigger circle, the circle of a dying love gift so that all those in the long line of punishment could go free. He cut in line, died, and paid the ultimate price, serving the ultimate sentence. Love swallowed vengeance. Love ate the sin and swallowed it *whole*. Just when justice had the whole human race climbing the steps to the guillotine blindfolded, Love offered His perfect head for us all. Now everyone is dancing in the street! Praise music is being played on every instrument imaginable! The old law system has been bought for the express purpose of destroying it so that the joy system could be put in its place. Satan has been made to watch his plan breaking apart—agony for him. But the ultimate agony is that he himself and all his tricks will be burned at the stake. Gone forever!

signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

The Son Made Lower than Angels

5 For He has not put the world to come,
of which we speak, in subjection to angels.
6 But one testified in a certain place, saying:

"What is man that You are mindful of him,
Or the son of man that You take care of him?
7 *You have made him a little lower than the angels;*
You have crowned him with glory and honor,[a]
And set him over the works of Your hands.
8 *You have put all things in subjection under his feet."*[a]

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.

HEBREWS 2:12

Bringing Many Sons to Glory

10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying:

"I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."[a]

2:7 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the rest of verse 7. **2:8** [a]Psalm 8:4–6
2:12 [a]Psalm 22:22

13 And again:

"I will put My trust in Him."[a]

And again:

"Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."[b]

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

The Son Was Faithful

3 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also *was faithful* in all His house. 3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things *is* God. 5 And Moses indeed *was* faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken *afterward,* 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.[a]

Be Faithful

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
8 *Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,*

2:13 [a]2 Samuel 22:3; Isaiah 8:17 [b]Isaiah 8:18 **3:6** [a]NU-Text omits *firm to the end.*

We who have believed do enter that rest.
HEBREWS 4:3

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
MATTHEW 11:28

Gradually, we come to realize that "rest" isn't just for a promised other world. Rest is the earmark of a life where Christ is the light.

The *real* weariness is the bone-tired exhaustion of struggling with the pull of the flesh: wanting in our heads to live right; wanting in our bodies to indulge the flesh. There has to be an execution. One of these two must (and will) be crucified. Either we will crucify the Christ-pull in us or we must crucify the flesh-pull by embracing the cross of Christ—His already finished work for us. If we choose the cross of Christ, a second rest takes over. We no longer have to "try by doing" to be God's person. We can relax and "be" God's person, handing over what we have as gifts already from Him to be used in amazing ways by Him. This is rest. Even being around a person at rest is a restful, refreshing experience. And by being at rest in Him, we can become a rejuvenating place for those who are still struggling and at war with their members (Rom. 7:23, 24).



Gospel Songs

For we who have believed do enter that rest.

HEBREWS 4:3

LIFE TODAY can sometimes seem like the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness: journeying to a destination yet unseen, decades of pain and loss, witnessing God's provision time and again, only to fall into despair and unbelief and sin over and over. The truly miserable part is that if only the Israelites had stuck to the truth—that God had freed them, that He had continued to provide for them, that He prepared a wonderful home for them—rather than become shortsighted and doubt Him, they would have known peace. They would have entered His rest. Instead, "And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:18).

But it doesn't have to be that way. There were a few Israelites who did believe, who trusted God with their lives no matter the circumstances, and they had the privilege of leading the next generation into the Promised Land. And He offers His rest to us as well, if only we would believe: "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest" (Heb. 4:1–3).

Eliza E. Hewitt knew all about needing a resting place. In her early adulthood she suffered an injury that would leave her bedridden for nearly the rest of her life. As she struggled with spinal problems, spending so many days in extreme pain and discomfort, rather than wallowing in self-pity and giving in to discouragement, she spent her time in bed writing songs of praise. Hewitt grew to understand the significance and longing for peace and that true rest comes only from one Source. The truth affirmed in her song "My Faith Has Found a Resting Place" proved to be an encouragement to Hewitt, to her loved ones, and still to believers today.



My Faith Has Found a Resting Place

Eliza E. Hewitt, 1891

My faith has found a resting place,
Not in device or creed;
I trust the ever living One,
His wounds for me shall plead.

Refrain:
I need no other argument,
I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.

Enough for me that Jesus saves,
This ends my fear and doubt;
A sinful soul I come to Him,
He'll never cast me out.

Refrain

My heart is leaning on the Word,
The living Word of God,
Salvation by my Savior's Name,
Salvation through His blood.

Refrain

My great Physician heals the sick,
The lost He came to save;
For me His precious blood He shed,
For me His life He gave.

Refrain



In the day of trial in the wilderness,
9 *Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,*
And saw My works forty years.
10 *Therefore I was angry with that*
generation,
And said, 'They always go astray in
their heart,
And they have not known My ways.'
11 *So I swore in My wrath,*
'They shall not enter My rest.'"[a]

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called *"Today,"* lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts as in the
rebellion."[a]

Failure of the Wilderness Wanderers

16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those

3:11 [a]Psalm 95:7–11 **3:15** [a]Psalm 95:7, 8



ERNIE HAASE • Homecoming Artist, *Ernie Haase and Signature Sound*, Formerly with *The Cathedral Quartet*

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. | HEBREWS 4:12

I have a great wife who has many ways to keep me humble. I really don't think she does it on purpose. She loves me just the way I am, but she can see right through my sales pitches, and she can cut to the core of the matter and give advice that sometimes I really don't want to hear. I am grateful for her and others in my life who both have my back and get in my face.

This book of love you're holding in your hands will cut straight to the heart of the matter. You may not like what you hear and you may feel the cut of the sword of the Lord, but you're better off listening and obeying. Thank God for His Word that helps us in our walk of faith. Our thoughts and intents are sometimes selfish and evil. We need the light of God's love shining on our path. His Word is that light.

I learned these verses as a kid:

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105 KJV

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Psalm 119:11 KJV

If I were a soldier, I would not go to battle without a weapon. Life is a battle, and we should never go to battle without our sword. What that old American Express commercial says I would say about the sword of God's Word: "Don't leave home without it!" Amen.

who did not obey? [19]So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The Promise of Rest

4 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. [2]For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them,[a] not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*. [3]For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

> *"So I swore in My wrath,*
> *'They shall not enter My rest,'"*[a]

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. [4]For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh *day* in this way: *"And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"*;[a] [5]and again in this *place: "They shall not enter My rest."*[a]

[6]Since therefore it remains that some *must* enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, [7]again He designates a certain day, saying in David, *"Today,"* after such a long time, as it has been said:

> *"Today, if you will hear His voice,*
> *Do not harden your hearts."*[a]

[8]For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. [9]There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. [10]For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.

The Word Discovers Our Condition

[11]Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. [12]For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. [13]And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

Our Compassionate High Priest

[14]Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. [15]For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are, yet* without sin. [16]Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Qualifications for High Priesthood

5 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. [2]He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. [3]Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins. [4]And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron *was*.

A Priest Forever

[5]So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but *it was* He who said to Him:

> *"You are My Son,*
> *Today I have begotten You."*[a]

[6]As *He* also says in another *place:*

> *"You are a priest forever*
> *According to the order of Melchizedek"*;[a]

[7]who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, [8]though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. [9]And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, [10]called by God as High Priest *"according to the order of Melchizedek,"* [11]of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

4:2 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *profit them, since they were not united by faith with those who heeded it.* **4:3** [a]Psalm 95:11 **4:4** [a]Genesis 2:2 **4:5** [a]Psalm 95:11 **4:7** [a]Psalm 95:7, 8 **5:5** [a]Psalm 2:7 **5:6** [a]Psalm 110:4

Spiritual Immaturity

12For though by this time you ought to
be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you
again the first principles of the oracles of
God; and you have come to need milk and
not solid food. 13For everyone who partakes
only of milk *is* unskilled in the word of right-
teousness, for he is a babe. 14But solid food
belongs to those who are of full age, *that is,*
those who by reason of use have their senses
exercised to discern both good and evil.

The Peril of Not Progressing

6 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the
elementary *principles* of Christ, let us
go on to perfection, not laying again the
foundation of repentance from dead works
and of faith toward God, 2of the doctrine of
baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrec-
tion of the dead, and of eternal judgment.
3And this we will[a] do if God permits.

4For *it is* impossible for those who were

6:3 [a]M-Text reads *let us do.*



BILL GAITHER

That you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. | HEBREWS 6:12

We hear a lot today about entitlement and we see examples of it everywhere we turn. I'm not sure whether it is the government, cultural influences, parenting trends, or the immediacy of the computer age driving this entitled way of thinking. But I fear we are raising a generation that lives under the illusion that there will always be a safety net—that as citizens of the world we should be able to expect certain benefits, whether or not we have earned them.

There is a fine line between enjoying the unmerited blessings of God's provision and taking responsibility for our lives. No one believes more than I that our future is dependent on trusting Christ. Living in His blessing is a wonderful gift.

At the same time, we can't ignore the reality that God's promises always bear a responsibility on our part. For instance, 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, "*If* my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, *then* I will hear from heaven" (emphasis added). And 1 John 1:9 says, "*If* we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us" (emphasis added).

Each privilege we enjoy as citizens and as the family of God has come at a price. Living in a state of gratitude and willingness to live responsibly is the only way to leave the world better for those who come after us.

An attitude of entitlement is the antithesis of personal responsibility. We combat it with gratitude and a commitment to leaving a legacy that makes our world better than we found it.

once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6if they fall away,[a] to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.

7For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8but if it bears thorns and briers, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.

A Better Estimate

9But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of[a] love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

God's Infallible Purpose in Christ

13For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14saying, *"Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."*[a] 15And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute. 17Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, 18that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might[a] have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*.

19This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the *Presence* behind the veil, 20where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The King of Righteousness

7For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

4Now consider how great this man *was,* to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. 5And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; 6but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them,* of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Need for a New Priesthood

11Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

14For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.[a] 15And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest

6:6 [a]Or *and have fallen away* **6:10** [a]NU-Text omits *labor of.* **6:14** [a]Genesis 22:17 **6:18** [a]M-Text omits *might.* **7:14** [a]NU-Text reads *priests.*

[16]who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. [17]For He testifies:[a]

"You are a priest forever
According to the order of
Melchizedek."[b]

[18]For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, [19]for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

Greatness of the New Priest

[20]And inasmuch as *He was* not *made priest* without an oath [21](for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him:

"The LORD has sworn
And will not relent,
'You are a priest forever[a]
According to the order of
Melchizedek'"),[b]

[22]by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.

[23]Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. [24]But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. [25]Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

[26]For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; [27]who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. [28]For the law appoints as high priests men who have

7:17 [a]NU-Text reads *it is testified.* [b]Psalm 110:4 **7:21** [a]NU-Text ends the quotation here. [b]Psalm 110:4



DONY McGUIRE • Homecoming Artist, Songwriter, Music Minister, Married to Reba Rambo-McGuire

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. | HEBREWS 9:12

When I reflect on over half a century of life in the church, I am constantly amazed at how many concepts and principles of Scripture are yet to be thoroughly discovered. I believe that is mostly due to the reality that the Bible is the Living Word. Therefore, it is constantly coming alive in us in different ways.

Having grown up in a very religious environment, it seems I was hounded with the thought that I was incapable of working hard enough or long enough to get good enough to make any real difference in God's ability to redeem me. I was hopelessly lost, and religion made sure I knew it.

How extremely delighted I was to discover that not only my sin issues but the sin issues of humanity were paid for with the blood of Jesus at His Cross. Once and for all!

weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, *appoints* the Son who has been perfected forever.

The New Priestly Service

8 Now *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore *it is* necessary that this One also have something to offer. 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, *"See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."*[a] 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

A New Covenant

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: *"Behold, the days are coming, says the* LORD, *when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the* LORD. *10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their*

8:5 [a]Exodus 25:40

But He, because He continues forever,
has an unchangeable priesthood.
Therefore He is also able to save
to the uttermost those who come to
God through Him, since He always
lives to make intercession for them.
HEBREWS 7:24, 25

It's life we're after. Oh, yes, to be rescued from the disastrously inevitable results of our unregenerate choices is a surprising and precious gift of His one-of-a-kind, once-and-for-all death. By it we are saved from an ultimate never-ending death with its horrible process.

But for what? We are saved, stripped of death and enduring pain to *live*! The point of it all is to *live*, and live free, dancing when no one is looking, singing when no one hears, joyful when there's no party, or no other people around for that matter. Living without fear, living with abandon, carefree as a child and twice as loving, forgiving, kind, unselfish—in short, living without all the actions and attitudes, choices and thought patterns that cause us and others pain—this is our goal. When a gift makes us clean, clear down to the core of our being, *that* is being saved "to the uttermost." And that's what His dying—and living—is for.



Going Home

Many times in my childhood
When we'd travel so far,
By nightfall how weary I'd grow;
Father's arm would slip 'round me,
So gently he'd say,
"My child, we're going home."

Now the twilight is fading
And the day soon shall end;
I get homesick the farther I roam,
But my Father has led me
Each step of the way,
And now we're going home.

Going home, I'm going home—
There's nothing to hold me here;
I've caught a glimpse of that heav'nly land,
Praise God, I'm going home.

Oh my heart gets so heavy
And I'm longing to see
My loved ones and friends I have known;
Ev'ry step draws me nearer
To the land of my dreams;
Praise God, I'm going home.

Going home, I'm going home—
There's nothing to hold me here;
I've caught a glimpse of that heav'nly land,
Praise God, I'm going home.



These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth . . . But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

HEBREWS 11:13–16

Bill and I had been away from home about a week, holding services in a church in eastern Tennessee. Our little Suzanne had been as patient as a one-year-old could be. Finally the last night, we said good-bye to our friends and packed our bags and boxes into our station wagon. I shook hands with the last of the people in the church lobby, then headed for the Sunday school room we had used as a dressing room—to put Suzanne's pajamas on her and jump into my jeans for the long drive home from Tennessee to Indiana.

As we pulled out of the parking lot, Suzanne asked, "Where are we going now, Mommy?" Children of traveling parents ask that question a lot.

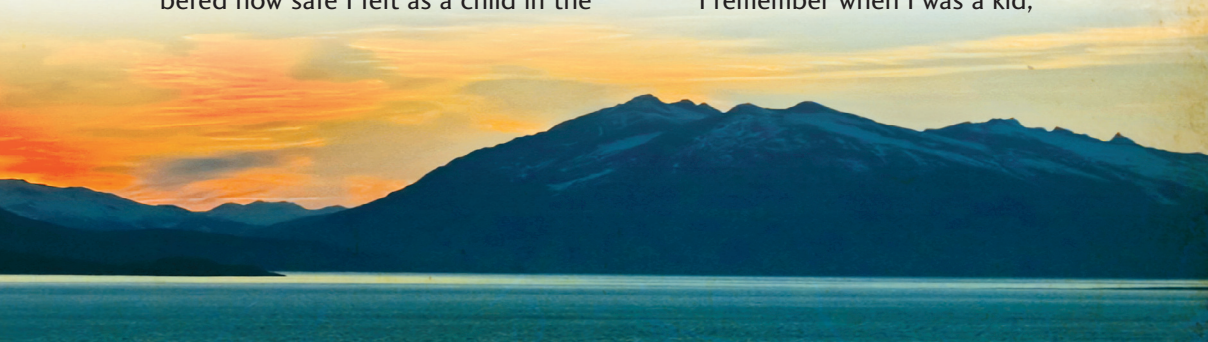
"Home, sweetheart," Bill answered. "We're going home."

She clapped her hands and made up a song. "Going home. We're going home," she sang until she finally fell asleep.

As we drove away from the city lights and onto the highway, I remembered how safe I felt as a child in the warm cocoon of our family car—heading home. My parents traveled often to conventions and other ministerial meetings. We were gone so often that my mother bought me an extra set of schoolbooks so I could keep up my work. There was something so comforting about finally leaving the place we'd been visiting to head home where we belonged.

Bill must have been thinking about something very similar.

"I remember when I was a kid,



Mom and Dad would take us to Nashville to the Ryman Auditorium for the all-night singings," he mused. "I'd beg and beg until Dad would finally agree to make the trip. He'd say, 'We'll go, but you better stay in that seat for every bit of that singing.'

"I think he was sorry he ever said that when, at one in the morning, I was still there listening to the very last song! And yet I remember how happy I felt when Dad would put his arm around my shoulder and say, 'Come on; let's go home,' and we'd pile in the car and head for home. I was so full of music and dreams about someday singing like that that I wouldn't stop talking for miles."

Suzanne had given us an idea for a new song, and her little tune kept going through our minds. Children who have to travel as much as ours did seldom beg to go someplace. Instead, they beg to stay home. Home is the sweetest place of all. They know; they've been everywhere else!

In a way we're all children of a traveling family. We've seen some nice places. We've stayed in some nice houses. We've had some memorable experiences and met some great people. But we really don't live in those places.

And sometimes the miles get long and the attractions—no matter how exciting—get to be just another county fair. No matter how much we sleep, we don't ever seem to be at rest. No matter how sweet the fellowship or how pleasant the hospitality, we don't ever seem to really belong.

But one of these days our Father will scoop us up in His strong arms and we will hear Him say those sweet and comforting words, "Come on, child. We're going home."



unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds[a] *I will remember no more."*[b]

13In that He says, *"A new covenant,"* He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The Earthly Sanctuary

9 Then indeed, even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. 2For a tabernacle was prepared: the first *part,* in which *was* the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 3and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which *were* the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

Limitations of the Earthly Service

6Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. 7But into the second part the high priest *went* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and *for* the people's sins *committed* in ignorance; 8the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— 10*concerned* only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

The Heavenly Sanctuary

11But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come,[a] with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

The Mediator's Death Necessary

16For where there *is* a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17For a testament *is* in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. 18Therefore not even the first *covenant* was dedicated without blood. 19For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20saying, *"This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you."*[a] 21Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Greatness of Christ's Sacrifice

23Therefore *it was* necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— 26He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27And as it is appointed for men

8:12 [a]NU-Text omits *and their lawless deeds.* [b]Jeremiah 31:31–34
9:11 [a]NU-Text reads *that have come.* **9:20** [a]Exodus 24:8

With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption . . . . And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

HEBREWS 9:12, 15

He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them.

HEBREWS 7:25

Though He was innocent, Jesus stood trial before the Jewish and Roman authorities alone with no defense attorney or advocate so that when we stand before the Judge of all judges guilty, we will have a constant and pure Advocate who is not only our defense but our substitute for whatever sentence could come. He negotiated with His blood and negated the sentence of death for us. The first covenant with God for a crime under the law was death, blood, torture. The new covenant was for us to be one with Christ (who did the death-blood-torture thing) and to go free. Jesus' love unto death saves us "to the uttermost." No other later evidence can be introduced to reopen the case—ever!

to die once, but after this the judgment,
28 so Christ was offered once to bear the
sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for
Him He will appear a second time, apart
from sin, for salvation.

Animal Sacrifices Insufficient

10 For the law, having a shadow of the
good things to come, *and* not the
very image of the things, can never with
these same sacrifices, which they offer
continually year by year, make those who
approach perfect. 2 For then would they
not have ceased to be offered? For the wor-
shipers, once purified, would have had no
more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those
sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every
year. 4 For *it is* not possible that the blood
of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Christ's Death Fulfills God's Will

5 Therefore, when He came into the
world, He said:

"Sacrifice and offering You did not
desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.
6 *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin*
You had no pleasure.
7 *Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—*
In the volume of the book it is written
of Me—
To do Your will, O God.'"[a]

8 Previously saying, *"Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them"* (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, *"Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God."*[a] He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all.*

Christ's Death Perfects the Sanctified

11 And every priest stands ministering
daily and offering repeatedly the same
sacrifices, which can never take away sins.
12 But this Man, after He had offered one
sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the
right hand of God, 13 from that time wait-
ing till His enemies are made His footstool.

10:7 [a]Psalm 40:6–8 **10:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *O God.*

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,

16 *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the* LORD: *I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"*[a] 17 *then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*[a] 18 Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin.

Hold Fast Your Confession

19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another,* and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

The Just Live by Faith

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, *"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"*[a] says the Lord.[b] And again, *"The* LORD *will judge His people."*[c] 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

10:16 [a]Jeremiah 31:33 **10:17** [a]Jeremiah 31:34 **10:30** [a]Deuteronomy 32:35 [b]NU-Text omits *says the Lord.* [c]Deuteronomy 32:36

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.
HEBREWS 11:16

In a time of shady accounting practices, inflated stock values, and crooked CEOs who steal the lifetime investments out from under their own stockholders, it's good to know that we have an inheritance coming that is *absolutely* guaranteed to hold its ever-increasing value.

The Chief Officer of these holdings isn't going anywhere. He is constantly present, all the while building a piece of real estate for us to one day move into that will exceed our wildest imagination.

When this is finished and the right moment of completion has come, He will come Himself, in person, and take us there. I have a feeling that's because He doesn't want to miss a moment of our utter delight when we see what He's been up to because He loves us so.



[32]But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: [33]partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; [34]for you had compassion on me[a] in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.[b] [35]Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. [36]For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

[37] *"For yet a little while,*
And He[a] who is coming will come and
will not tarry.

[38] *Now the[a] just shall live by faith;*
But if anyone draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him."[b]

[39]But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

By Faith We Understand

11 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. [2]For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony.

[3]By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

10:34 [a]NU-Text reads *the prisoners* instead of *me in my chains.* [b]NU-Text omits *in heaven.* **10:37** [a]Or *that which* **10:38** [a]NU-Text reads *My just one.* [b]Habakkuk 2:3, 4



DAVID TEEMS • Author, Formerly with *David Teems and the Calling*

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. | HEBREWS 12:2

It is comforting to think of Jesus as an author, a finisher, a perfecter. It comforts me even more to know He literally puts Himself into His work, and that He does it so thoroughly. The signature He leaves is a living signature, the autograph of God, peculiar to Him alone. It cannot be forged or imitated.

The finest painting of a sunset will never be more than a painting of a sunset. It will never change. It will have many admirers, but it will never live. The best it can do is mimic divine authorship. Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* is a wonder, yes, but it is still a two-dimensional wonder, a wonder of old paint and genius.

The sunset I watched yesterday was much more than that. It was a living thing. It was fluid. It was lyrical. There was poetry and understatement in its movement. A single beam of dying light, a downy bloat of clouds, a sky that seemed to bleed. Moment to moment, from glory to glory, never dull, a playing out of some script, and right before my eyes. Asking things of my senses that a painting cannot ask. Moving me in ways unknown to art.

Now *that* is authorship.

And though I am more important to Him than any spectacle of nature, He leaves nothing out. His signature is all around us. It is fluid. It is lyrical. The detail is immaculate, as He is immaculate.

Faith at the Dawn of History

4By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

5By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, *"and was not found, because God had taken him"*;[a] for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

7By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Faithful Abraham

8By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

11By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child[a] when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

The Heavenly Hope

13These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them,[a] embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to

11:5 [a]Genesis 5:24 **11:11** [a]NU-Text omits *she bore a child.*
11:13 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *were assured of them.*

Lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.

HEBREWS 12:1, 2

Often we say that we want to be more like Jesus. That is a goal for life and a deep desire of our hearts. Usually the qualities that we have in mind to emulate are things like kindness, patience, goodness, courage, strength, and the ability to forgive.

But seldom do we strive for the two qualities that most reflect the character of Christ next to love itself: endurance and consistency. It is the single-minded objective of Christ's life: to finish the course and to do what He came to do. His last words on the Cross reveal that He did, indeed, accomplish what He was born to do.

Much has been debated about the meaning of John's final revelation of Christ. But the one theme that the Book of Revelation brands on our hearts is this: "He who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). *With passionate focus, Lord, let me endure until the end. Let me see the goal and finish the race!*



Gospel Songs

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

HEBREWS 12:2

HELEN LEMMEL'S talent and service to the Lord never turned her eyes away from the One who caused her voice to sing. Though born in England, at twelve years old Helen moved to America with her parents. Her parents took notice of her musical talent, and they sent Helen overseas to receive professional training. Upon her return to the States, Helen played many concerts. She easily could have succeeded in a secular music career, but Helen chose to use her voice to sing for her Savior. She taught at Bible colleges, critiqued music, and directed choirs. But her life took a dramatic turn when she went blind and her husband left her.

Like Job, Helen seemed to have done everything right, but that didn't mean she was spared from heartache. Living in a fallen world with imperfect people (including ourselves), we're bound to experience our share of sorrow. Wading through the heartaches of life can be a tough, slow process, but one danger can be focusing too long on our despair, which can lead to long-term depression or bitterness. Instead, the Lord teaches us in Hebrews where to shift our focus: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (12:1, 2).

Helen Lemmel took this lesson to heart when she heard the tract "Focused" by Lilias Trotter. Trotter wrote, "So then, turn your eyes upon Him, look full into His face and you will find that the things of earth acquire a strange new dimness." Struck by Trotter's words, Lemmel wrote "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus." Later she recalled the experience:

> *Suddenly, as if commanded to stop and listen, I stood still, and singing in my soul and spirit was the chorus, with not one conscious moment of putting word to word to make rhyme, or note to note to make melody. The verses were written the same week, after the usual manner of composition, but nonetheless dictated by the Holy Spirit.*

So, are you weary and troubled? Turn your eyes upon Jesus, and you'll know the truth—that He is the light in any darkness.

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

Helen Lemmel, 1918

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!

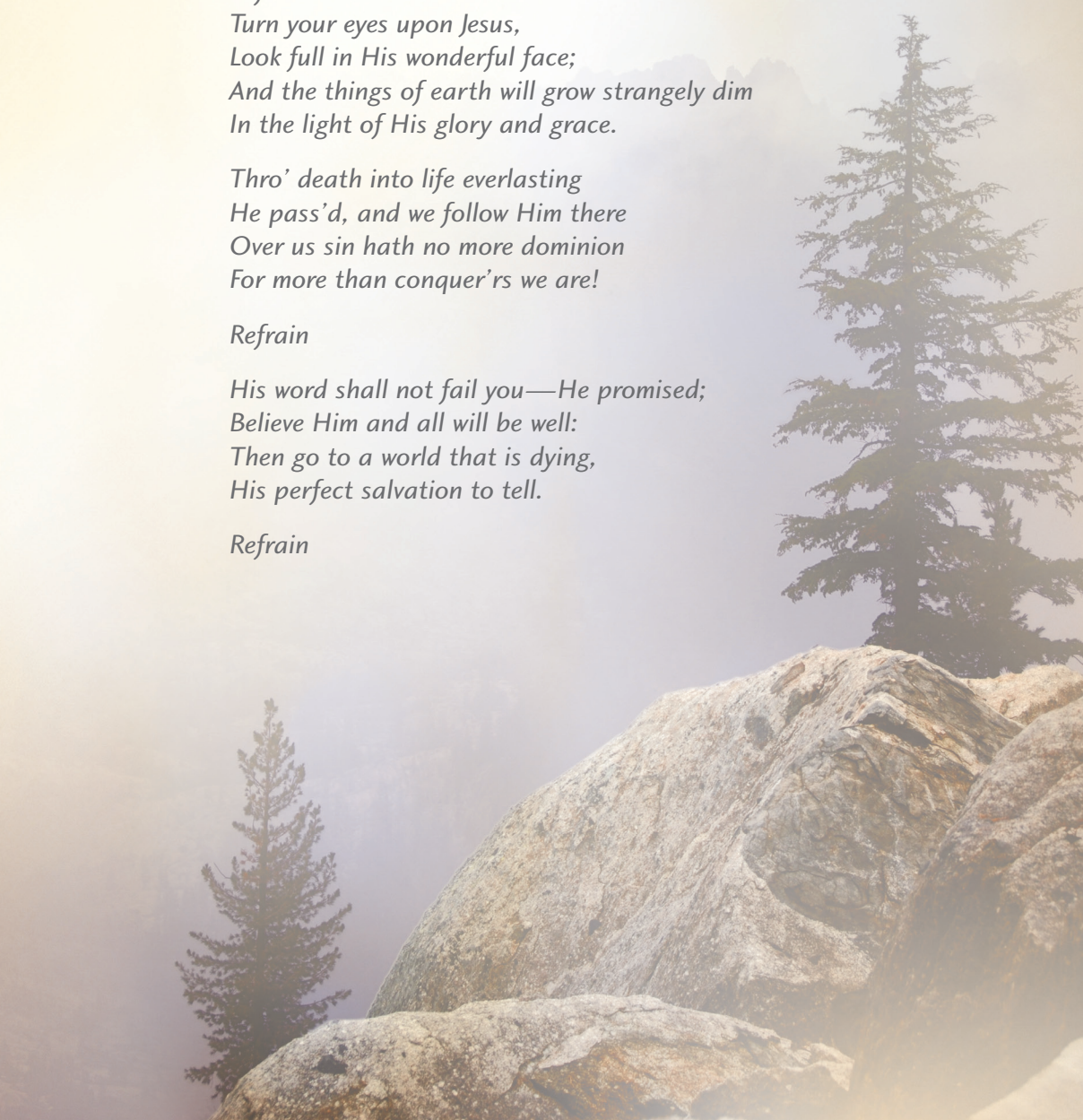
Refrain:
Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

Thro' death into life everlasting
He pass'd, and we follow Him there
Over us sin hath no more dominion
For more than conquer'rs we are!

Refrain

His word shall not fail you—He promised;
Believe Him and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell.

Refrain



You have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest. . . . But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God . . . to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.
HEBREWS 12:18, 22–24

What is this mountain we are to consider our destination—this Mount Zion? It is a mound, a heap, a tall formidable thing that makes the smoking volcanic mountain of superstitious religion pale in its presence. Mount Zion is not a mound of decayed and acidified matter; it is a living thing—the towering and irresistible magnetic field of God Himself and the presence of His awesome reality; and it is the essential reality of all the saints who have ever made it through this life by faith in His power to make them perfect in Him. Now, in Him and perfect, they are the awesome draw of Mount Zion. We, too, are invited, not just to visit and stand in awe, but to become, to move in, to be a part of Mount Zion!



return. [16]But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country.* Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

The Faith of the Patriarchs

[17]By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son,* [18]of whom it was said, *"In Isaac your seed shall be called,"*[a] [19]concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

[20]By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

[21]By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.

[22]By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

The Faith of Moses

[23]By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

[24]By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, [25]choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, [26]esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in[a] Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

[27]By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. [28]By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

[29]By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry *land, whereas* the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.

By Faith They Overcame

[30]By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. [31]By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish

11:18 [a]Genesis 21:12 **11:26** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *of.*

with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

[32]And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also *of* David and Samuel and the prophets: [33]who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, [34]quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. [35]Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. [36]Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. [37]They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted,[a] were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— [38]of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth.

[39]And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, [40]God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

The Race of Faith

12 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us,* and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2]looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

11:37 [a]NU-Text omits *were tempted.*

I will never leave you nor forsake you.
HEBREWS 13:5

The promises, grace, and love of God are portable. We sometimes act like if we go out the door or don't maintain some posture, we'll somehow lose the protection of God. God's presence isn't a misty vapor; it is a real presence more enduring than that of a husband or a dear friend. Indeed, "real" presences can and do go away. They come and go with the fickle weather of the emotions. But we are accompanied by the *only* one who is with us always. And—this is the best part—He will accomplish what He intends to do. He will see His plan through, and not get offended and desert us, even when we are clueless about what He's up to.



The Discipline of God

3For consider Him who endured such
hostility from sinners against Himself,
lest you become weary and discouraged
in your souls. 4You have not yet resisted
to bloodshed, striving against sin. 5And
you have forgotten the exhortation which
speaks to you as to sons:

"My son, do not despise the chastening
of the LORD,
Nor be discouraged when you are
rebuked by Him;
6 *For whom the* LORD *loves He chastens,*
And scourges every son whom He
receives."[a]

7If[a] you endure chastening, God deals
with you as with sons; for what son is there
whom a father does not chasten? 8But if
you are without chastening, of which all
have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9Furthermore, we
have had human fathers who corrected
us, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not
much more readily be in subjection to the
Father of spirits and live? 10For they indeed
for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best*
to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may
be partakers of His holiness. 11Now no
chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it
yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness
to those who have been trained by it.

Renew Your Spiritual Vitality

12Therefore strengthen the hands which
hang down, and the feeble knees, 13and

12:6 [a]Proverbs 3:11, 12 **12:7** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *It is for discipline that you endure; God . . . .*



KELLY NELON CLARK • Homecoming Artist, *The Nelons*

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. | HEBREWS 13:2

In 1997, I was expecting my second child, Autumn Lynn. At this season in my life I was under a lot of stress and developing high blood pressure. At one point, my blood pressure registered 210/110, and I developed toxemia, which contributed to premature labor. Autumn was born with a lot of complications and rushed right after birth to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. The doctors had no good news for me. She had a hole in her lungs and pneumonia. They could not get enough oxygen into her tiny, frail body. Her weight in itself was not terrible at 5 pounds, 8 ounces, but it seemed as though you could see right through her transparent skin. I helplessly watched as she almost died two or three times.

Doctors came to tell me that her chances were slim, and if she made it, she could possibly have learning disabilities and become blind and deaf. It all looked bleak. I stayed by her bedside constantly. I knew every doctor and every nurse on all shifts. At one point the doctors came in and said if her condition did not change, they would be forced to life-line her to a children's hospital in Atlanta. I prayed and cried and prayed some more that

make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

14 Pursue peace with all *people,* and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:
15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;
16 lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.
17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

The Glorious Company

18 For you have not come to the mountain that[a] may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness[b] and tempest,
19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.
20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: *"And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned*[a] *or shot with an arrow."*[b]
21 And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, *"I am exceedingly afraid* and trembling."[a])

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,
23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,
24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to

12:18 [a]NU-Text reads *to that which.* [b]NU-Text reads *gloom.*
12:20 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the rest of this verse. [b]Exodus 19:12, 13
12:21 [a]Deuteronomy 9:19

God would intervene and take care of her and help her oxygen level rise to where it would become normal and steady.

About an hour after the doctors gave me that news, a nurse I had never seen before stepped into the unit. She was an African American woman with a beautiful face and smile. She started looking around Autumn's oxygen tent and snapping it on all sides. It worried me that she was there, as I thought she was bothering her oxygen supply. She must have seen the troubled look I had and turned and said, "This little baby is going to be fine." I said with not a whole lot of confidence. "I believe that."

"No, you listen. She is going to be fine. I have snapped up her tent where all the oxygen was escaping, and now as God watches over her she will be fine." I meekly said thank you as she walked out of the room.

What I'm telling you is exactly what happened; almost as soon as she walked out, Autumn began to improve. Her oxygen levels began to come up immediately. Ten days later we were able to take Autumn home. I began to ask about the nurse who had visited me. I described her to every nurse, doctor, and maintenance person there, but no one knew of her or had ever seen her. I can only believe that God sent an angel to comfort us and protect us when life seemed so fatally fragile. Though I was the one who had given birth to Autumn, I had no control over her life or possible death. Today Autumn is maturing into a beautiful young lady with wonderful musical talent passed down from her grandfather, Rex Nelon. How thankful I am that God always sends something or someone our way to let us know that He loves and protects us and that He is in control!

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.
HEBREWS 13:15

It is impossible to separate praise from trust, and God detects praise empty of trust in a heartbeat! The reason true praise is so pleasing to God is not that He is a giant ego needing to be adored. It is because in relinquishing control and learning to risk trust—total trust—in what He is up to, we free Him to do all that is good in our lives. The freedom of this results naturally in praise from us and in loving action from Him.

Praise gimmicks, worship trances, certain pious postures are empty to us and obnoxious to God. True praise is the fruit of a trusting heart. It is the sweet delight of a child who says, "I love you, Daddy," or "You're the *best,* Mommy!" after a day of trusting play the parent has planned. God loves to see our joy come from eternal things, not from the plastic toys of earth.



the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel.

Hear the Heavenly Voice

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, *"Yet once more I shake*[a] *not only the earth, but also heaven."*[b] 27 Now this, *"Yet once more,"* indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may[a] serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God *is* a consuming fire.

Concluding Moral Directions

13 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels. 3 Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.

4 Marriage *is* honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

5 *Let your* conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."*[a] 6 So we may boldly say:

"The LORD is my helper;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?"[a]

Concluding Religious Directions

7 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct. 8 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever. 9 Do not be carried about[a] with various and strange

12:26 [a]NU-Text reads *will shake.* [b]Haggai 2:6 **12:28** [a]M-Text omits *may.* **13:5** [a]Deuteronomy 31:6, 8; Joshua 1:5 **13:6** [a]Psalm 118:6 **13:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *away.*

doctrines. For *it is* good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.

10We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. 15Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name. 16But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

17Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Prayer Requested

18Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. 19But I especially urge *you* to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Benediction, Final Exhortation, Farewell

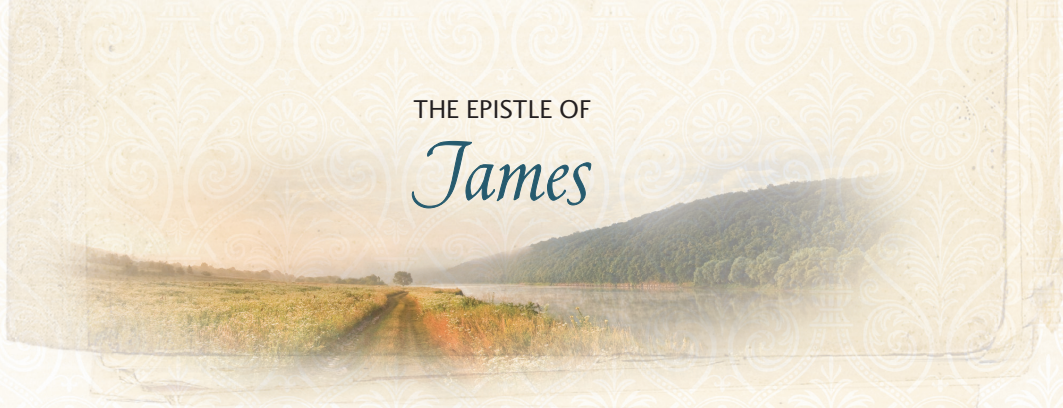
20Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you[a] what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

22And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words. 23Know that *our* brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.

24Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.

25Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

13:21 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *us*.



THE EPISTLE OF

James

Greeting to the Twelve Tribes

1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:

Greetings.

Profiting from Trials

[2]My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, [3]knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. [4]But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. [5]If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. [6]But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. [7]For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [8]*he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

The Perspective of Rich and Poor

[9]Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, [10]but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. [11]For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Loving God Under Trials

[12]Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. [13]Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. [14]But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. [15]Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

[16]Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. [17]Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. [18]Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Qualities Needed in Trials

[19]So then,[a] my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; [20]for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Doers—Not Hearers Only

[21]Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

[22]But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. [23]For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; [24]for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. [25]But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

[26]If anyone among you[a] thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless. [27]Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit

1:19 [a]NU-Text reads *Know this* or *This you know.* **1:26** [a]NU-Text omits *among you.*

orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Beware of Personal Favoritism

2 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality. [2]For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, [3]and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," [4]have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

[5]Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? [6]But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? [7]Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

[8]If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself,"*[a] you do well; [9]but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. [10]For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point,* he is guilty of all. [11]For He who said, *"Do not commit adultery,"*[a] also said, *"Do not murder."*[b] Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. [12]So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. [13]For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith Without Works Is Dead

[14]What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? [15]If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, [16]and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? [17]Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

2:8 [a]Leviticus 19:18 **2:11** [a]Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18 [b]Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
JAMES 1:5

Do you know how some people can make you feel really stupid when you ask for information or seek advice? Well, God doesn't play those kinds of games. And He knows everything. He wants us to ask, and He wants us to know what we long to know. He doesn't enjoy putting us down.

But it would be really stupid to act cocky with God. Like I said, He knows everything, so for us to act like we're hot stuff makes Him sick. He not only knows the truth, He is truth—pure, like a diamond or a piece of pure gold. When His truth—when His Word—penetrates us, we are infused with illumination. We understand what is true. His truth in us keeps us from sinning because sins are lies, lies against our bodies, our minds, our souls, and our spirits. Truth won't allow them.

[18]But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your[a] works, and I will show you my faith by my[b] works. [19]You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! [20]But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?[a] [21]Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? [22]Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? [23]And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, *"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*[a] And he was called the friend of God. [24]You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

[25]Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

[26]For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

The Untamable Tongue

3 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. [2]For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. [3]Indeed,[a] we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. [4]Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. [5]Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

2:18 [a]NU-Text omits *your.* [b]NU-Text omits *my.* **2:20** [a]NU-Text reads *useless.* **2:23** [a]Genesis 15:6 **3:3** [a]NU-Text reads *Now if.*



REBECCA ISAACS BOWMAN • Homecoming Artist, *The Isaacs*

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. | JAMES 1:2, 3

This verse in James makes me examine my own life and my own suffering. I ask myself, *Have I lived my life with joy? When put to the test, have I persevered*? It's only human to see suffering from earthly eyes, yet as God reveals Himself, we learn to see through spiritual eyes. I am not sure when in the process of my own suffering and pain I learned to see through both. Honestly, some days I feel like I wear all kinds of prescription glasses. You know, glasses to help me correct my faulty vision and find answers to the big questions like, *Why me, God? Will my pain and suffering ever end? Will these trials ever be lifted*? Then, surprisingly, right in the midst of the suffering, God begins to show me glimpses of hope and joy and comfort. Ten years ago I was diagnosed with an incurable disease, a rare form of Crohn's disease. All the inflammation from my colon has spread to my skin and eyes. It has been a very hard disease to diagnose and treat simply because the disease is not in textbook form. I remember when I first became sick. I was waiting for test results in hopes that they could help me discover what was wrong.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! [6]And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. [7]For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. [8]But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. [9]With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. [10]Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. [11]Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? [12]Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.[a]

The soul of the artist cannot remain hidden.

HENRI NOUWEN

Heavenly Versus Demonic Wisdom

[13]Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. [14]But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. [15]This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. [16]For where envy and self-seeking *exist,* confusion and every evil thing *are* there. [17]But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing

3:12 [a]NU-Text reads *Neither can a salty spring produce fresh water.*

During this time I remember the devil telling me that my life was over and my job was done. God couldn't use someone sick like me. But the Enemy is a liar. As believers in Christ, we have the promise that if we put on the full armor of God, when the day of evil comes, we will be able to stand our ground (Eph. 6:13). "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4:8, 9). I cling to the promises Jesus gave us. They have become my strength, my light, and my hope. I may not know what tomorrow holds, what suffering I may endure. But what I do know is that He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Trials are not pleasant; life can be extremely grievous, but we have the opportunity through our suffering to purify our faith, to exercise our patience and endurance, and to persevere. I know that our suffering is not in vain. Our suffering is not punishment. I can say that my suffering is to define God's perfect will in my life and to bring out His divine purpose. I learn this lesson daily, not to keep to myself, but to share my suffering and victories for His glory. I believe as the scripture says, "You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good" (Gen. 50:20).

Today, Lord, let me see the sunshine through the rain, the beauty in the pain. Amen.

to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. [18]Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Pride Promotes Strife

4 Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members? [2]You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet[a] you do not have because you do not ask. [3]You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. [4]Adulterers and[a] adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship

4:2 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Yet.* **4:4** [a]NU-Text omits *Adulterers and.*



JONATHAN MARTIN • Homecoming Artist, *The Martins*

But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. | JAMES 1:4

In this verse, James is reminding the reader that disappointments will come. Growing up in southern rural Arkansas, there was not a lot to do. In our family we had chores and, of course, music, which took up most of our time at home. Living sixteen miles out of town, our parents allowed each of us to choose one school-related extracurricular activity. I chose football.

When I was a sophomore, my coach asked me to be second-string quarterback. That meant that as a junior and senior I would be the starting quarterback! I was so excited! I went with great enthusiasm home to tell my folks. I expected great congratulations, but instead received a reminder from my parents, "Jonathan, you remember that together as a family we prayed and decided to enter full-time ministry this year, which means you are going to be homeschooled. You aren't going to Hamburg High School this year." I did recall asking God to lead us in His will and being part of the decision for ministry, but as a teenager I couldn't help being disappointed about forgoing my career in football. The reality was crushing, and my faith was a little shaken.

I had to realize that all of us face trials, challenges, and heartache. Our negative circumstances, no matter how they manifest themselves, can wreak havoc on our faith. The divinely intended purpose for these periodic setbacks is that we embrace each test as an opportunity to grow. To become perfect, mature, and complete.

Think about it! The Creator of heaven and earth meticulously planned every event in our lives, even those hard to accept or understand, to develop in us the testimony that proves His faithfulness. He has laid out the entire journey of our lives, and it includes valleys and mountains, blessings and trials. Don't you think you can trust someone who already knows the outcome?

My loving Creator-God had greater things in mind for me on that day of disappointment. He was beginning something bigger than Arkansas football. God was beginning for me the greatest and most rewarding opportunity of my whole life, a life of sharing God's message in word and song! I am so glad God had and has a plan for me, and I am thankful for a life of ministry!

with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [5]Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

[6]But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

"God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble."[a]

Humility Cures Worldliness

[7]Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. [8]Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. [9]Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. [10]Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Do Not Judge a Brother

[11]Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. [12]There is one Lawgiver,[a] who is able to save and to destroy. Who[b] are you to judge another?[c]

Do Not Boast About Tomorrow

[13]Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will[a] go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; [14]whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. [15]Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." [16]But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

[17]Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it,* to him it is sin.

Rich Oppressors Will Be Judged

5 Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!* [2]Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. [3]Your gold and

4:6 [a]Proverbs 3:34 **4:12** [a]NU-Text adds *and Judge.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *But who.* [c]NU-Text reads *a neighbor.* **4:13** [a]M-Text reads *let us.*



BUDDY MULLINS • Homecoming Artist

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. | JAMES 1:22–25

I have traveled for most of my life, and I have had the chance to hear many great teachers of the Word, but here James gives us a warning that just hearing is not enough. Truth is, for many years I let other godly men's teaching be all of my study, and church attendance was my main statement of doing something for God. I have realized over the past few years that God desires much more than filling a pew and hearing the Word spoken. He desires for it to get into us and change us and our world around us. His Word is alive, and it's time to let it awaken us to all we can be in Him.

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

JAMES 4:13–15

Gospel songwriters have been accused of writing songs mainly about two topics: getting saved and going to heaven. To that I would have to plead guilty. The reason for that is that once a person finds a valid answer to the big questions, "Why am I here?" and "Where am I going?" the rest of life can be lived with meaning and direction. The daily stuff that tends to be in our faces can gain some perspective, and the great songs encourage that:

Farther along, we'll know all about it
Farther along, we'll understand why.
Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine,
We'll understand it all by and by.

"Farther Along," W.A. Fletcher

or

But, until then, my heart will go on singing;
Until then with joy I'll carry on!
Until the day my eyes behold the city,
Until the day God calls me home.

"Until Then," Stuart Hamblen



silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. [4]Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.[a] [5]You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as[a] in a day of slaughter. [6]You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

We are the song of the universe. We sing with the angelic host. We are the musicians. The farae and the stars are the singers. Our song orders the rhythm of creation.

MADELEINE L'ENGLE

Be Patient and Persevering

[7]Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. [8]You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

JAMES 5:13

[9]Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned.[a] Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! [10]My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. [11]Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

5:4 [a]Literally, in Hebrew, *Hosts* **5:5** [a]NU-Text omits *as*. **5:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *judged*.

[12]But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and *your* "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.[a]

Meeting Specific Needs

[13]Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. [14]Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. [15]And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [16]Confess *your* trespasses[a] to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. [17]Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. [18]And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Bring Back the Erring One

[19]Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, [20]let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul[a] from death and cover a multitude of sins.

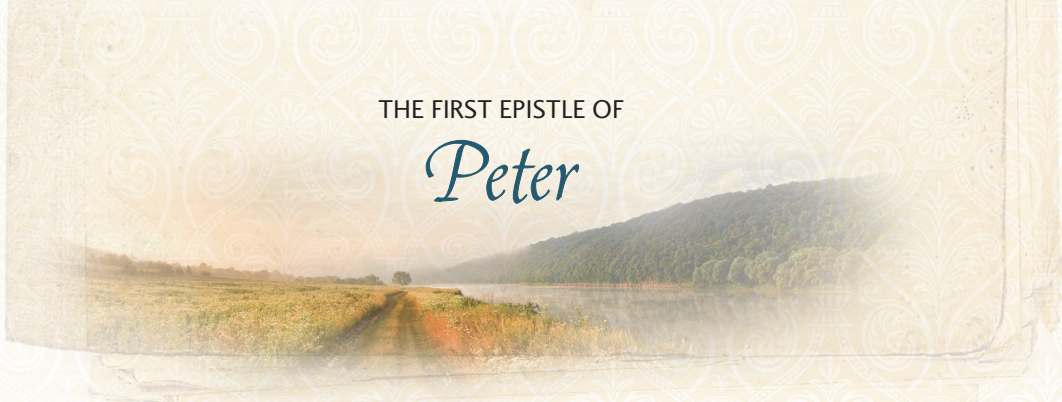
5:12 [a]M-Text reads *hypocrisy.* **5:16** [a]NU-Text reads *Therefore confess your sins.* **5:20** [a]NU-Text reads *his soul.*

When the big issues of life are settled, we can live the rest of life.

We can live like we've got "nothin' to lose." But what would that look like *today*, if we knew this was close to our last day? Where would I wish I had taken my family if I knew I was "leavin' today"? What letter would I write? What would I do with my bank account or my time schedule or the energy I have *today*?

Whom would I invite for dinner; to whom would I offer the guest room or a ride to church or a trip to the grocery store? Whom would I take on a fishing trip or a shopping trip or a cruise? Where would I volunteer my skills, my expertise, my hours, my knowledge, if I knew time was running out?

The beauty of the Christ-centered life is that we *do* know that time on this earth is limited and that nothing else except the relationships we treasure and nurture will survive this life or time itself. We also like knowing that beyond time there is *more*—much more—and the quality of that "more" depends on the soul investment we make today.



THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

Peter

Greeting to the Elect Pilgrims

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

A Heavenly Inheritance

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen[a] you love. Though now you do not see *Him,* yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us[a] they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

Living Before God Our Father

13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, 16 because it is written, *"Be holy, for I am holy."*[a]

17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

The Enduring Word

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit[a] in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,[a]

1:8 [a]M-Text reads *known.* **1:12** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *you.*
1:16 [a]Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7 **1:22** [a]NU-Text omits *through the Spirit.* **1:23** [a]NU-Text omits *forever.*

24 because

"All flesh is as grass,
And all the glory of man[a] *as the flower of the grass.*
The grass withers,
And its flower falls away,
25 *But the word of the* LORD *endures forever."*[a]

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

2 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,[a] 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

The Chosen Stone and His Chosen People

4 Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

"Behold, I lay in Zion
A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,
And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."[a]

7 Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient,[a]

"The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone,"[b]

8 and

"A stone of stumbling
And a rock of offense."[a]

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once

1:24 [a]NU-Text reads *all its glory.* **1:25** [a]Isaiah 40:6–8 **2:2** [a]NU-Text adds *up to salvation.* **2:6** [a]Isaiah 28:16 **2:7** [a]NU-Text reads *to those who disbelieve.* [b]Psalm 118:22 **2:8** [a]Isaiah 8:14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
1 PETER 1:3

When we are conceived of our parents, our genes are coded with the genetics of our human lineage. The physical appearance, the mental attitudes, the predispositions to certain weaknesses or strengths—all are there in every chromosome.

The redeeming glory is this: because of Jesus we are reconceived after the spiritual genes of our heavenly Father! God—bless His merciful name!—He's "begotten us" again! Our new genetic codes are hope, joy, peace, long suffering, patience, kindness, love for others, tenderness. God "begot" us once in creation, the love of His hands. Now He has "begotten" us again into a living eternal hope through His Son's resurrection from death. We are now a whole piece. The cracks in the chromosomes of our souls are healed! We are "complete in Him"!



Gospel Songs

Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

1 PETER 1:8, 9

"I HAVE FOUND His grace is all complete, He supplieth every need . . . It is joy unspeakable and full of glory." Barney Warren wrote these words as a tribute to His Savior whose sacrifice and gift of grace he accepted as a teenager at a revival in Michigan. After that, he joined up with Daniel Sidney Warner and his evangelistic singing company, contributing as a bass. Spending his days and nights singing the praises of God, surrounded in the fellowship of believers, and witnessing countless hearts turn to Christ provided him with endless inspiration. Warren ended up writing more than seven thousand songs. Warren eventually became a pastor and produced several hymnals and songbooks over the span of six decades. What a privilege to know Jesus Christ, to usher others into intimate knowledge of Him, and to lead them in song of this joy unspeakable!

Joy Unspeakable

Barney Warren, 1900

I have found His grace is all complete,
He supplieth every need;
While I sit and learn at Jesus' feet,
I am free, yes, free indeed.

Refrain:
It is joy unspeakable and full of glory,
Full of glory, full of glory;
It is joy unspeakable and full of glory,
Oh, the half has never yet been told.

Refrain

I have found the pleasure I once craved,
It is joy and peace within;
What a wondrous blessing, I am saved
From the awful gulf of sin.

Refrain

I have found that hope so bright and clear,
Living in the realm of grace;
Oh, the Savior's presence is so near,
I can see His smiling face.

Refrain

I have found the joy no tongue can tell,
How its waves of glory roll;
It is like a great o'erflowing well,
Springing up within my soul.

Refrain

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

1 PETER 1:6–9

The old saying "Seeing is believing" is at least *less* than true. Not seeing and believing is real truth. Eyes can deceive, but the deep longing for truth will always bring the truth, even when it can't yet be seen.

Jesus doesn't mind revealing Himself, but He always eventually reveals Himself to those who go on loving Him when there is no revelation. That is faith.



were not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Living Before the World

[11]Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, [12]having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Submission to Government

[13]Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, [14]or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. [15]For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— [16]as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. [17]Honor all *people.* Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

Submission to Masters

[18]Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. [19]For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. [20]For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. [21]For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us,[a] leaving us[b] an example, that you should follow His steps:

[22] *"Who committed no sin,*
Nor was deceit found in His mouth";[a]

[23]who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; [24]who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes

2:21 [a]NU-Text reads *you.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *you.* **2:22** [a]Isaiah 53:9

you were healed. 25For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer[a] of your souls.

Submission to Husbands

3 Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. 3Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— 4rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

A Word to Husbands

7Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Called to Blessing

8Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous;[a] 9not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10For

"He who would love life
And see good days,
Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
And his lips from speaking deceit.
11 *Let him turn away from evil and*
do good;
Let him seek peace and pursue it.
12 *For the eyes of the* LORD *are on the*
righteous,
And His ears are open to their prayers;
But the face of the LORD *is against*
those who do evil."[a]

2:25 [a]Greek *Episkopos* **3:8** [a]NU-Text reads *humble*. **3:12** [a]Psalm 34:12–16

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.
1 PETER 2:11

I felt there was a mighty tug-of-war going on for someone I loved. I felt the pull was very strong, and I was in prayer all day knowing that if my friend let go of the faith for a moment to fight, the enemy would pull her into oblivion. This tug-of-war was definitely between flesh and spirit.

Paul's warning to "make no provision for the flesh" is so important, but the wonderful, great hope that the promise that "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" is emblazoned on our hearts (Rom. 8:37). We can't go on without hope, "but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom. 8:13). Choose the Spirit and live!

Lord, today I would love, believe, trust—without proof. Because You have promised that if I abide in love, we will be shown love in visible form. Thank You for Your blessing to those who do not see and yet stubbornly believe. It is a lifeline to my soul.

Gospel Songs

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

1 PETER 5:6, 7

METHODIST PASTOR Frank Graeff was so cheery and optimistic, he was actually referred to as "the Sunshine Minister" by his community in Philadelphia. But his life wasn't all sunshine and roses. He faced a series of personal setbacks, disappointments, and temptations. At one point he was struggling with serious doubts and depression while suffering from intense physical pain and the resulting emotional toll it was taking on him. He began to ask himself whether God really cared about him at all. In his despair, he opened his Bible and read 1 Peter 5:6, 7, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." His song "Does Jesus Care?" is a result of his heartache being comforted by the truth that, yes, Jesus does care. He cared enough to cry with those heartbroken by Lazarus's grave (John 11:35). He cared enough to endure the emotional anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39–46). He cared enough to withstand the physical torture of death on the Cross (Mark 15:15–41). He *knows* our pain. And He cares.



Does Jesus Care?

Frank E. Graeff, 1901

Does Jesus care when my heart is pained
Too deeply for mirth or song,
As the burdens press, and the cares distress
And the way grows weary and long?

Refrain:
Oh yes, He cares, I know He cares,
His heart is touched with my grief;
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,
I know my Savior cares.

Does Jesus care when my way is dark
With a nameless dread and fear?
As the daylight fades into deep night shades,
Does He care enough to be near?

Refrain

Does Jesus care when I've tried and failed
To resist some temptation strong;
When for my deep grief there is no relief,
Though my tears flow all the night long?

Refrain

Does Jesus care when I've said "goodbye"
To the dearest on earth to me,
And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks,
Is it aught to Him? Does He see?

Refrain

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you . . .
But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, and evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.
1 PETER 4:14, 15

Jesus gets blamed for stuff Christians do. The cause of Christ suffers more from the attitudes and actions of "Christians" than from anything else. Satan loves it!

Peter has a great insight here. If we are persecuted for truly being like Christ, we should count it a privilege to suffer with Him. But we should never blame Christianity if we get persecuted for being a jerk. God has nothing to do with that.

Mercy, truth, joy, good news, integrity, noble thoughts, beauty, purity, and seeing the best in others are the natural results of living in union with Christ. These may, at times and for a while, make others uncomfortable. But in the end, love and goodness win even after we're dead. The gospel doesn't die when its messenger is killed. When will the world ever learn: you can't kill a message by killing the messenger.



Suffering for Right and Wrong

13 And who *is* he who will harm you if you
become followers of what is good? 14 But
even if you should suffer for righteousness'
sake, *you are* blessed. *"And do not be afraid
of their threats, nor be troubled."*[a] 15 But
sanctify the Lord God[a] in your hearts, and
always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone
who asks you a reason for the hope that is
in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a
good conscience, that when they defame
you as evildoers, those who revile your
good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.
17 For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to
suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Christ's Suffering and Ours

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins,
the just for the unjust, that He might bring
us[a] to God, being put to death in the flesh
but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom
also He went and preached to the spirits
in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedi-
ent, when once the Divine longsuffering
waited[a] in the days of Noah, while *the* ark
was being prepared, in which a few, that
is, eight souls, were saved through water.
21 There is also an antitype which now
saves us—baptism (not the removal of the
filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good
conscience toward God), through the res-
urrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone
into heaven and is at the right hand of
God, angels and authorities and powers
having been made subject to Him.

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us[a]
in the flesh, arm yourselves also with
the same mind, for he who has suffered in
the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 that he no
longer should live the rest of *his* time in
the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the
will of God. 3 For we *have spent* enough of
our past lifetime[a] in doing the will of the
Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness,
lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking par-
ties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard
to these, they think it strange that you
do not run with *them* in the same flood
of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*. 5 They

3:14 [a]Isaiah 8:12 **3:15** [a]NU-Text reads *Christ as Lord*. **3:18** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *you*. **3:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *when the longsuffering of God waited patiently*. **4:1** [a]NU-Text omits *for us*. **4:3** [a]NU-Text reads *time*.

will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Serving for God's Glory

7But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8And above all things have fervent love for one another, for *"love will cover a multitude of sins."*[a] 9*Be* hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Suffering for God's Glory

12Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you,* for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.[a] On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.[a]

17For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18Now

"If the righteous one is scarcely saved,
Where will the ungodly and the sinner
appear?"[a]

19Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

Shepherd the Flock

5 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly,[a] not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

Submit to God, Resist the Devil

5Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

"God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble."[a]

6Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

8Be sober, be vigilant; because[a] your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 10But may[a] the God of all grace, who called us[b] to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you.* 11To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

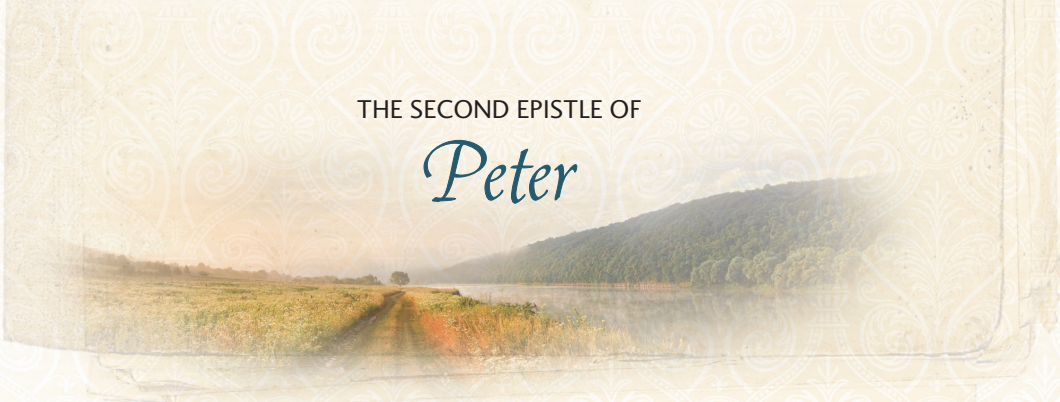
Farewell and Peace

12By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

13She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you,* greets you; and *so does* Mark my son. 14Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

4:8 [a]Proverbs 10:12 **4:14** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **4:16** [a]NU-Text reads *name.* **4:18** [a]Proverbs 11:31 **5:2** [a]NU-Text adds *according to God.* **5:5** [a]Proverbs 3:34 **5:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *because.* **5:10** [a]NU-Text reads *But the God of all grace . . . will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *you.*



THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

Peter

Greeting the Faithful

1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle
of Jesus Christ,
To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:
2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you
in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our
Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us
all things that *pertain* to life and godliness,
through the knowledge of Him who called
us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have
been given to us exceedingly great and
precious promises, that through these you
may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the
world through lust.

Fruitful Growth in the Faith

5 But also for this very reason, giving all
diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue
knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to
self-control perseverance, to perseverance
godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For
if these things are yours and abound, *you*
will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the
knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For
he who lacks these things is shortsighted,
even to blindness, and has forgotten that
he was cleansed from his old sins.
10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for
if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to
you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter's Approaching Death

12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things,
though you know and are established in
the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right,
as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up
by reminding *you*, 14 knowing that shortly I
must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus
Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be
careful to ensure that you always have a
reminder of these things after my decease.

The Trustworthy Prophetic Word

16 For we did not follow cunningly devised
fables when we made known to you the
power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,
but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For
He received from God the Father honor and
glory when such a voice came to Him from
the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son,
in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard
this voice which came from heaven when we
were with Him on the holy mountain.
19 And so we have the prophetic word
confirmed,[a] which you do well to heed as
a light that shines in a dark place, until
the day dawns and the morning star rises
in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that
no prophecy of Scripture is of any private
interpretation,[a] 21 for prophecy never came
by the will of man, but holy men of God[a]
spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

Destructive Doctrines

2 But there were also false prophets
among the people, even as there will be
false teachers among you, who will secretly
bring in destructive heresies, even denying
the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on
themselves swift destruction. 2 And many
will follow their destructive ways, because
of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit
you with deceptive words; for a long time
their judgment has not been idle, and
their destruction does[a] not slumber.

1:19 [a]Or *We also have the more sure prophetic word.* **1:20** [a]Or *origin*
1:21 [a]NU-Text reads *but men spoke from God.* **2:3** [a]M-Text reads *will not.*

Doom of False Teachers

4For if God did not spare the angels
who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and
delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be
reserved for judgment; 5and did not spare the
ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of* eight
people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing
in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6and
turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah
into ashes, condemned *them* to destruc-
tion, making *them* an example to those who
afterward would live ungodly; 7and delivered
righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy
conduct of the wicked 8(for that righteous
man, dwelling among them, tormented *his*
righteous soul from day to day by seeing
and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— 9*then* the
Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of
temptations and to reserve the unjust under
punishment for the day of judgment, 10and
especially those who walk according to the
flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise
authority. *They are* presumptuous, self-willed.
They are not afraid to speak evil of digni-
taries, 11whereas angels, who are greater in
power and might, do not bring a reviling
accusation against them before the Lord.

Depravity of False Teachers

12But these, like natural brute beasts
made to be caught and destroyed, speak



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. | 2 PETER 1:4

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. | JOHN 17:22

It was said of an old man that "his face was like an ancient chapel, with all the lamps inside lighted up for evening worship." Doug had an experience that makes this quotation a reality.

About a year before Ethel Waters's death, Doug sat for a couple of hours one afternoon with her and talked with her. They were in her home. In the midst of the conversation about her life, she started to sing, just for him, the words to a Bill and Gloria Gaither song, "I Could Never Outlove the Lord":

I'm going to live the way He wants me to live,
I'm going to give until there's just no more to give,
I'm going to love, love 'til there's just no more love,
I could never, never outlove the Lord.

He said it gave him goose bumps, for when she started to sing, it was like a light had been turned on inside and her face was aglow!

There is no other explanation for a phenomenon like this, other than the fact that it is the glory of the Lord, shining through like a lighted lamp, giving an old and wrinkled face the beauty of an ancient chapel.

His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2 PETER 1:3, 4

Charles Wesley was a prolific songwriter who drew inspiration mostly from his own life experience and faith (see pp. 1394 and 1644). But one of his most well-beloved hymns, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling," finds its origins in a semi-opera. "Fairest Isle, All Isles Excelling" is featured in the operatic play *King Arthur* when the character Venus extols the virtues of the Isle of Britain: "Fairest isle, all isles excelling, seat of pleasures, and of loves; Venus here, will chuse her dwelling, and forsake her Cyprian groves." Wesley used this stanza sung by the fictional goddess of love as the framework for a song exalting the God who *is* love. How brilliant to take the song of a character whose mythology encompasses all worldly attempts at carnal love, with its empty promises and lust, and to transform it to reflect God's divine power with "exceedingly great and precious promises" (2 Pet. 1:4). And that's what God's love does for us, trading our hearts of stone for hearts of flesh: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26). Like Charles Wesley did with this beautiful hymn, the Lord can do with each of our lives, redeeming us for His own glory, if only we ask Him.

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Charles Wesley | 1747

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down;
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart.

2. Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit;
Let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

4. Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, [13]*and* will receive the wages of unrighteousness, *as* those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. *They are* spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, [14]having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children. [15]They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; [16]but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

[17]These are wells without water, clouds[a] carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.[b]

Deceptions of False Teachers

[18]For when they speak great swelling *words* of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped[a] from those who live in error. [19]While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. [20]For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. [21]For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it,* to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. [22]But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: *"A dog returns to his own vomit,"*[a] and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

God's Promise Is Not Slack

3 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), [2]that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us,[a] the apostles of the Lord and Savior, [3]knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, [4]and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation." [5]For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, [6]by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. [7]But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

[8]But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. [9]The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us,[a] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

2:17 [a]NU-Text reads *and mists.* [b]NU-Text omits *forever.* **2:18** [a]NU-Text reads *are barely escaping.* **2:22** [a]Proverbs 26:11 **3:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *commandment of the apostles of your Lord and Savior* or *commandment of your apostles of the Lord and Savior.* **3:9** [a]NU-Text reads *you.*



The Day of the Lord

[10]But the day of the Lord will come as
a thief in the night, in which the heavens
will pass away with a great noise, and the
elements will melt with fervent heat; both
the earth and the works that are in it will
be burned up.[a] [11]Therefore, since all these
things will be dissolved, what manner *of*
persons ought you to be in holy conduct
and godliness, [12]looking for and hastening
the coming of the day of God, because of
which the heavens will be dissolved, being
on fire, and the elements will melt with fer-
vent heat? [13]Nevertheless we, according to
His promise, look for new heavens and a
new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Be Steadfast

[14]Therefore, beloved, looking forward
to these things, be diligent to be found by
Him in peace, without spot and blameless;
[15]and consider *that* the longsuffering of
our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved
brother Paul, according to the wisdom
given to him, has written to you, [16]as also in
all his epistles, speaking in them of these
things, in which are some things hard to
understand, which untaught and unstable
people twist to their own destruction, as
they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

[17]You therefore, beloved, since you
know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also
fall from your own steadfastness, being led
away with the error of the wicked; [18]but
grow in the grace and knowledge of our
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him *be* the glory both now and for-
ever. Amen.

3:10 [a]NU-Text reads *laid bare* (literally *found*).





THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

John

What Was Heard, Seen, and Touched

1 That which was from the beginning,
which we have heard, which we have
seen with our eyes, which we have looked
upon, and our hands have handled, con-
cerning the Word of life— 2the life was
manifested, and we have seen, and bear
witness, and declare to you that eternal
life which was with the Father and was
manifested to us— 3that which we have
seen and heard we declare to you, that you
also may have fellowship with us; and truly
our fellowship *is* with the Father and with
His Son Jesus Christ. 4And these things we
write to you that your[a] joy may be full.

Fellowship with Him and One Another

5This is the message which we have
heard from Him and declare to you, that
God is light and in Him is no darkness at
all. 6If we say that we have fellowship with
Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do
not practice the truth. 7But if we walk in the
light as He is in the light, we have fellowship
with one another, and the blood of Jesus
Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8If we say that we have no sin, we
deceive ourselves, and the truth is not
in us. 9If we confess our sins, He is faith-
ful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to
cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we
say that we have not sinned, we make Him
a liar, and His word is not in us.

2 My little children, these things I write to
you, so that you may not sin. And if any-
one sins, we have an Advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous. 2And He Himself
is the propitiation for our sins, and not for
ours only but also for the whole world.

The Test of Knowing Him

3Now by this we know that we know
Him, if we keep His commandments. 4He
who says, "I know Him," and does not keep
His commandments, is a liar, and the truth
is not in him. 5But whoever keeps His word,
truly the love of God is perfected in him.
By this we know that we are in Him. 6He
who says he abides in Him ought himself
also to walk just as He walked.

7Brethren,[a] I write no new command-
ment to you, but an old commandment
which you have had from the beginning.
The old commandment is the word which
you heard from the beginning.[b] 8Again, a
new commandment I write to you, which
thing is true in Him and in you, because
the darkness is passing away, and the true
light is already shining.

9He who says he is in the light, and
hates his brother, is in darkness until now.
10He who loves his brother abides in the
light, and there is no cause for stumbling
in him. 11But he who hates his brother is in
darkness and walks in darkness, and does
not know where he is going, because the
darkness has blinded his eyes.

Their Spiritual State

12 I write to you, little children,
Because your sins are forgiven you for
His name's sake.
13 I write to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is*
from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
Because you have overcome the
wicked one.
I write to you, little children,
Because you have known the Father.
14 I have written to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is*
from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men,

1:4 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *our.* **2:7** [a]NU-Text reads *Beloved.* [b]NU-Text omits *from the beginning.*

Because you are strong, and the word
of God abides in you,
And you have overcome the wicked one.

Do Not Love the World

15 Do not love the world or the things
in the world. If anyone loves the world,
the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For
all that *is* in the world—the lust of the
flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride
of life—is not of the Father but is of the
world. 17 And the world is passing away, and
the lust of it; but he who does the will of
God abides forever.

Deceptions of the Last Hour

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and
as you have heard that the[a] Antichrist is
coming, even now many antichrists have
come, by which we know that it is the last
hour. 19 They went out from us, but they
were not of us; for if they had been of us,
they would have continued with us; but
they went out that they might be made man-
ifest, that none of them were of us.

20 But you have an anointing from the
Holy One, and you know all things.[a] 21 I
have not written to you because you do
not know the truth, but because you know
it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he who denies that
Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who
denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever
denies the Son does not have the Father
either; he who acknowledges the Son has
the Father also.

Let Truth Abide in You

24 Therefore let that abide in you which
you heard from the beginning. If what you
heard from the beginning abides in you,
you also will abide in the Son and in the
Father. 25 And this is the promise that He
has promised us—eternal life.

26 These things I have written to you
concerning those who *try to* deceive
you. 27 But the anointing which you have
received from Him abides in you, and you
do not need that anyone teach you; but
as the same anointing teaches you con-
cerning all things, and is true, and is not a
lie, and just as it has taught you, you will[a]
abide in Him.

The Children of God

28 And now, little children, abide in Him,
that when[a] He appears, we may have con-
fidence and not be ashamed before Him
at His coming. 29 If you know that He is
righteous, you know that everyone who
practices righteousness is born of Him.

3 Behold what manner of love the Father
has bestowed on us, that we should
be called children of God![a] Therefore the
world does not know us,[b] because it did not
know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children
of God; and it has not yet been revealed
what we shall be, but we know that when
He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we
shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who
has this hope in Him purifies himself, just
as He is pure.

Sin and the Child of God

4 Whoever commits sin also commits
lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. 5 And
you know that He was manifested to take
away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.
6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin.
Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor
known Him.

7 Little children, let no one deceive you.
He who practices righteousness is right-
eous, just as He is righteous. 8 He who
sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned
from the beginning. For this purpose the
Son of God was manifested, that He might
destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever
has been born of God does not sin, for His
seed remains in him; and he cannot sin,
because he has been born of God.

The Imperative of Love

10 In this the children of God and the
children of the devil are manifest: Whoever
does not practice righteousness is not
of God, nor *is* he who does not love his
brother. 11 For this is the message that you
heard from the beginning, that we should
love one another, 12 not as Cain *who* was of
the wicked one and murdered his brother.
And why did he murder him? Because his
works were evil and his brother's righteous.

13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the

2:18 [a]NU-Text omits *the*. **2:20** [a]NU-Text reads *you all know*. **2:27** [a]NU-Text reads *you abide*. **2:28** [a]NU-Text reads *if*. **3:1** [a]NU-Text adds *And we are*. [b]M-Text reads *you*.

world hates you. [14]We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother[a] abides in death. [15]Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

The Outworking of Love

[16]By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. [17]But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

[18]My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. [19]And by this we know[a] that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. [20]For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. [21]Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. [22]And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. [23]And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us[a] commandment.

The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error

[24]Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. [2]By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the

3:14 [a]NU-Text omits *his brother.* **3:19** [a]NU-Text reads *we shall know.*
3:23 [a]M-Text omits *us.*



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. | 1 JOHN 3:18

My first memory of my oldest brother, Charles, is of him rocking me to sleep every night in one of the two rocking chairs in our rural farmhouse living room. I would sit in Daddy's lap but when I was getting sleepy, I'd climb up in Charles's lap and he would rock me to sleep. There was seventeen years' difference in our ages, and I adored him. All of the neighbors and everyone at church loved Charles, and I thought every family had a "Charles" until I started the first grade. He was born in 1922 when there were no programs available in instruction of cognitive and educational skills for a child with mental challenges. Charles did his share of the farm work that he was capable of and never complained. There was much he could not do. My mom was Charles's primary caregiver. She bathed and dressed him and tied his shoes. Daddy shaved Charles and cut his hair. As we siblings grew, we shared in the caretaking, but in hindsight, I wish I had done more when I was younger.

flesh is of God, [3]and every spirit that does not confess that[a] Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

[4]You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. [5]They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. [6]We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Knowing God Through Love

[7]Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. [8]He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. [9]In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. [10]In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. [11]Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Seeing God Through Love

[12]No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. [13]By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. [14]And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world. [15]Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. [16]And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

4:3 [a]NU-Text omits *that* and *Christ has come in the flesh.*

Daddy passed away at age eighty-two. Mama had dementia then that was gradually progressing. I recall one day cleaning her house, giving both her and Charles a bath, and preparing the mix for salt-free yeast rolls that she ate because of a heart condition. I told her that I had to go to my home, but I would return in time to bake the yeast rolls and cook their supper. When I returned, Mama had rolled out the risen yeast dough and made dumplings for chicken that I was boiling to make baked chicken and dressing for their supper. Needless to say, the yeast dough dumplings were terrible, and I had to make another batch of yeast mixture so she would have bread to eat. I attempted to make her understand what she had done. I regretted doing that and learned to say, "It's all right, Mama. We'll work it out." Mama passed away at age eighty-five.

Charles and my brother Jack lived together in the homeplace and there was a lot of caregiving for both brothers during the next fifteen-year span. I realized during that time that in the forty-five years that I was privileged to have my mom, I never heard her complain about her daily care of Charles.

Perhaps you are a caregiver. In John 15:13, Jesus said there is no greater love than laying down your life for someone. "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

We love Him because He first loved us.

1 JOHN 4:19

The apostle Paul once encouraged Timothy, his son in the faith, "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). That's a directive that William Featherston took to heart as well. Born in Montreal, Canada, Featherston grew up going to Wesleyan Methodist Church with his family, and when he was sixteen, he proclaimed faith in Jesus as his Savior and his Lord. Featherston had grasped that key element that seems to elude so many church-going folks today: love. He knew Jesus loved him, knew he loved Jesus, and knew *why* he was capable of such love: "I love Thee because Thou has first loved me." Just think, God, who *is* love, gives us the capacity and the privilege to love Him back and love one another as He loves us: "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:8, 10, 11). So, inspired by such love, young William Featherston wrote this love poem, "My Jesus I Love Thee," and sent it to his aunt in Los Angeles. She had it published the next year in the *London Hymnbook*. Just a decade later, Featherston passed away, and he met the Savior whom he so loved face-to-face.

My Jesus, I Love Thee

William Featherston | 1862

1. My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign.
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

2. I love Thee because Thou has first loved me,
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree.
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

3. I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;
And say when the death dew lies cold on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

4. In mansions of glory and endless delight,
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

The Consummation of Love

17 Love has been perfected among us in
this: that we may have boldness in the day
of judgment; because as He is, so are we in
this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but
perfect love casts out fear, because fear
involves torment. But he who fears has not
been made perfect in love. 19 We love Him[a]
because He first loved us.

Obedience by Faith

20 If someone says, "I love God," and
hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who
does not love his brother whom he has
seen, how can[a] he love God whom he has
not seen? 21 And this commandment we
have from Him: that he who loves God *must*
love his brother also.

5 Whoever believes that Jesus is the
Christ is born of God, and everyone
who loves Him who begot also loves him
who is begotten of Him. 2 By this we know
that we love the children of God, when we
love God and keep His commandments.
3 For this is the love of God, that we keep
His commandments. And His command-
ments are not burdensome. 4 For whatever
is born of God overcomes the world. And
this is the victory that has overcome the
world—our[a] faith. 5 Who is he who over-
comes the world, but he who believes that
Jesus is the Son of God?

The Certainty of God's Witness

6 This is He who came by water and
blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water,
but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit
who bears witness, because the Spirit is
truth. 7 For there are three that bear wit-
ness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and
the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.
8 And there are three that bear witness on
earth:[a] the Spirit, the water, and the blood;
and these three agree as one.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the
witness of God is greater; for this is the wit-
ness of God which[a] He has testified of His

4:19 [a]NU-Text omits *Him.* **4:20** [a]NU-Text reads *he cannot.* **5:4** [a]M-Text reads *your.* **5:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the words from *in heaven* (verse 7) through *on earth* (verse 8). Only four or five very late manuscripts contain these words in Greek. **5:9** [a]NU-Text reads *God, that.*



DONY McGUIRE • Homecoming Artist, Songwriter, Music Minister, Married to Reba Rambo-McGuire

We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. | 1 JOHN 4:14

What have you done that has incapacitated you and kept you from embracing humanity the way I do?

Such a strange question to hear Father asking as I was traveling south on Interstate 75 headed toward Atlanta one cold January morning in 2005. A question that would not stop being asked of me until I pulled over on the side of the road and witnessed a 90-minute life-video playing in my mind of how I had treated God's most prized possession, His creation. In that moment of sweet communion, God wrapped His arms around me and I was consumed by a love I had never really known before—God's love. Not His wrath or His anger, not His frustration or displeasure, but His love.

Needless to say, that day became the day of my greatest awakening. On

Where words fail, music speaks.
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Son. [10]He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. [11]And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. [12]He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. [13]These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,[a] and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.

Confidence and Compassion in Prayer

[14]Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. [15]And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

[16]If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does* not *lead* to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. [17]All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

Knowing the True—Rejecting the False

[18]We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself,[a] and the wicked one does not touch him.

[19]We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one.

[20]And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

[21]Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

5:13 [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **5:18** [a]NU-Text reads *him.*

that Georgia roadside, I had a baptism of overwhelming compassion enlarging my capacity to comprehend the holy privilege of embracing all of God's precious, beautiful children.

In that moment of transformation and the reconfiguration of my overall thought process, my reason for living for God dramatically changed. His hope for humanity is at an all-time high, and here's why:

> "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. (Matt. 22:37, 38)

For the better part of my life, I have served God out of fear of what would happen to me if I didn't. It's quite amazing that in a recent poll, Christians were asked the question, "Why do you serve God?" Of them, 95% answered, "Because I don't want to go to hell."

The better part of my journey has been about getting to a place where my service to God is not out of fear of what will happen to me if I don't, but based on the reality that I'm a recipient of His unconditional love. The only response I can have is to love Him back with all my heart, my soul, my mind, and my strength.



THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

John

Greeting the Elect Lady

The Elder,

To the elect lady and her children,
whom I love in truth, and not only I, but
also all those who have known the truth,
[2]because of the truth which abides in us
and will be with us forever:

[3]Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with
you[a] from God the Father and from the
Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in
truth and love.

Walk in Christ's Commandments

[4]I rejoiced greatly that I have found
some of your children walking in truth,
as we received commandment from the
Father. [5]And now I plead with you, lady, not
as though I wrote a new commandment to
you, but that which we have had from the
beginning: that we love one another. [6]This
is love, that we walk according to His com-
mandments. This is the commandment,
that as you have heard from the beginning,
you should walk in it.

Beware of Antichrist Deceivers

[7]For many deceivers have gone out into
the world who do not confess Jesus Christ
as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver
and an antichrist. [8]Look to yourselves, that
we[a] do not lose those things we worked for,
but *that* we[b] may receive a full reward.

[9]Whoever transgresses[a] and does not
abide in the doctrine of Christ does not
have God. He who abides in the doctrine of
Christ has both the Father and the Son. [10]If
anyone comes to you and does not bring
this doctrine, do not receive him into your
house nor greet him; [11]for he who greets
him shares in his evil deeds.

John's Farewell Greeting

[12]Having many things to write to you, I
did not wish *to do so* with paper and ink;
but I hope to come to you and speak face
to face, that our joy may be full.

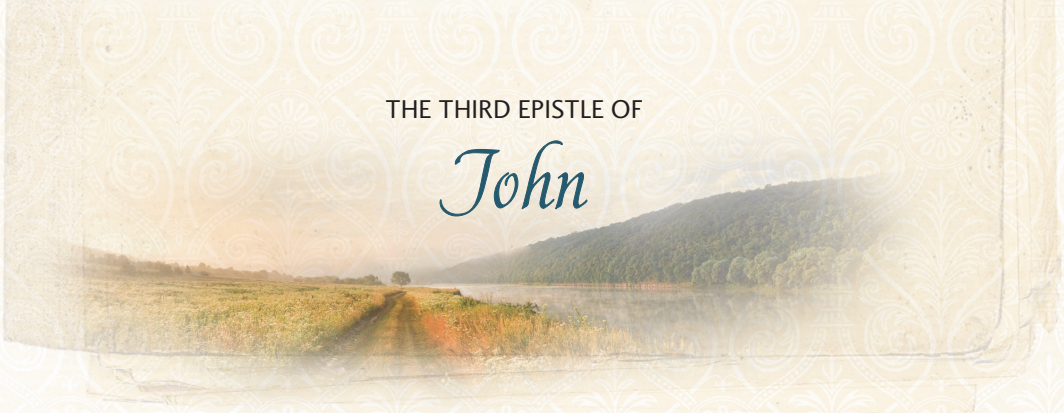
[13]The children of your elect sister greet
you. Amen.

---

3 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *us*. **8** [a]NU-Text reads *you*. [b]NU-Text reads *you*.
9 [a]NU-Text reads *goes ahead*.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF

John



Greeting to Gaius

The Elder,

To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:

[2]Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. [3]For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. [4]I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.[a]

Gaius Commended for Generosity

[5]Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and[a] for strangers, [6]who have borne witness of your love before the church. *If* you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, [7]because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. [8]We therefore ought to receive[a] such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.

Diotrephes and Demetrius

[9]I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. [10]Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.

[11]Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but[a] he who does evil has not seen God.

[12]Demetrius has a *good* testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.

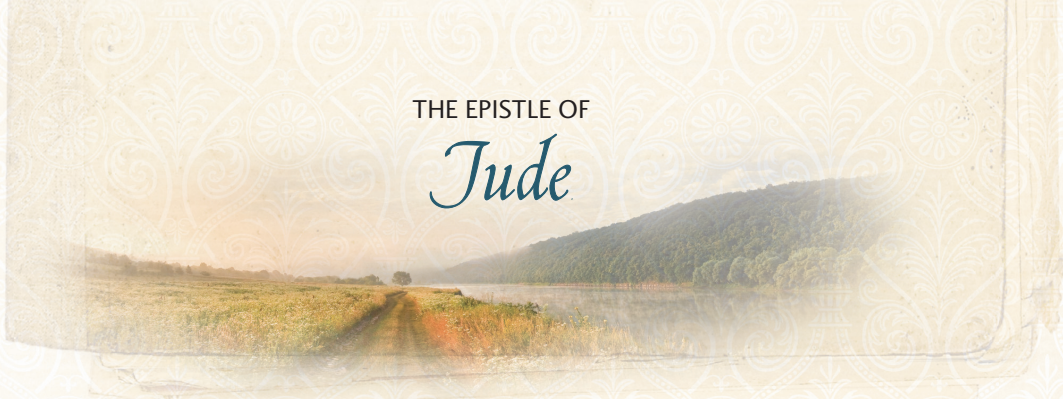
Farewell Greeting

[13]I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; [14]but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face.

Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

---

4 [a]NU-Text reads *the truth*. **5** [a]NU-Text adds *especially*.
8 [a]NU-Text reads *support*. **11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *but*.



THE EPISTLE OF

Jude

Greeting to the Called

Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,

To those who are called, sanctified[a] by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:

[2]Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Contend for the Faith

[3]Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. [4]For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God[a] and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Old and New Apostates

[5]But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward

1 [a]NU-Text reads *beloved.* **4** [a]NU-Text omits *God.*



CONNIE HOPPER • Homecoming Artist, *The Hoppers*

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. | JUDE 24, 25

The morning church service was special. Afterwards, we were invited home with some dear friends for lunch. During lunch our friend's mother, who lived next door, came in. She was eighty-seven, had arthritis, an artificial hip, and quite a number of pins in one of her legs due to several breaks from falls. She was really jolly. She got around really well with the aid of a cane. She asked me if I'd like to go to her house to take a bath before we left for our night service. Then she told me the reason she had offered was because her bathroom had just been redecorated with new tile, wallpaper and the works. She was so proud of it. I told her I had taken a bath that morning, but I would love to go over and see her new bathroom.

As we were leaving her daughter's house, I cautioned her to be careful of the steps. She said, "Oh, I'm real careful. I used to fall a lot, but I found a verse of scripture and I've memorized it, and you know, I haven't fallen one time

destroyed those who did not believe. [6]And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; [7]as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

[8]Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. [9]Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" [10]But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. [11]Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Apostates Depraved and Doomed

[12]These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried about[a] by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; [13]raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

[14]Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, [15]to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Apostates Predicted

[16]These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and

12 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *along*.

since." I didn't waste any time. I asked her what was the verse? She turned and looked at me and quoted, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever" (Jude 24, 25).

I smiled because she had just made my day. I followed her to her little house, where she proudly showed me each room. They had all been freshly painted and redecorated. Then she told me how her children and grandchildren had shared the expense. It had been their Christmas gift to her. She said, "Now that's love." We talked on for a little while, and if I mentioned a scripture she would quote it from memory. I commented on that, and she said, "I have gone to bed for forty years quoting the ninety-first psalm." She went on to tell me that she had memorized a great many of the psalms and after she prayed at night she would recite the psalms until she fell asleep.

As I left her house, my step was a little higher—my spirit had been lifted—for I knew she had learned the secret to true joy and contentment. She had filled her inner being with the one thing that Satan cannot stand against nor steal away: the Word of God!

If you feel empty inside, I challenge you to search the Scriptures, memorize the verses that God directs you to, and let Him bring the Word to life in your life. God's Word is life to us and health to our flesh (Prov. 4:22).

Gospel Songs

And on some have compassion, making a distinction;
but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire,
hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

JUDE 22, 23

FANNY CROSBY, who wrote some of history's most well-loved hymns and gospel songs, spent her life dedicated to the mission of leading the lost to find their home with Jesus. Of her song on that very topic, "Rescue the Perishing," she wrote:

> As I was addressing a large company of working men one hot August evening, the thought kept forcing itself upon my mind that some mother's boy must be rescued that very night or perhaps not at all. So I requested that, if there was any boy present, who had wandered away from mother's teaching, he would come to the platform at the conclusion of the service. A young man of eighteen came forward and said, "Did you mean me? I have promised my mother to meet her in heaven; but as I am now living that will be impossible." We prayed for him; he finally arose with a new light in his eyes; and exclaimed triumphantly, "Now, I can meet mother in heaven; for I have found her God.
>
> A few days before, Mr. Doane had sent me the subject "Rescue the Perishing," and while I sat there that evening the line came to me, "Rescue the perishing, care for the dying." I could think of nothing else that night. When I arrived at my home I went to work on it at once; and before I retired the entire hymn was ready for a melody. The next day my words were written and forwarded to Mr. Doane, who wrote the beautiful and touching music as it now stands.
>
> In November, 1903, I went to Lynn, Massachusetts, to speak before the Young Men's Christian Association. I told them the incident that led me to write "Rescue the Perishing," as I have just related it. After the meeting a large number of men shook hands with me, and among them was a man, who seemed to be deeply moved. You may imagine my surprise when he said, "Miss Crosby, I was the boy, who told you more than thirty-five years ago that I had wandered from my mother's God. The evening that you spoke at the mission I sought and found peace, and I have tried to live a consistent Christian life ever since. If we never meet again on earth, we will meet up yonder." As he said this, he raised my hand to his lips; and before I had recovered from my surprise he had gone; and remains to this day a nameless friend, who touched a deep chord of sympathy in my heart. It is these notes of sympathy that vibrate when a voice calls them forth from the dim memories of the past, and the music is celestial.

Rescue the Perishing

Fanny Crosby, 1869

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.

Refrain:
Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.

Though they are slighting Him, still He is waiting,
Waiting the penitent child to receive;
Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently;
He will forgive if they only believe.

Refrain

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

Refrain

Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior has died.

Refrain

they mouth great swelling *words,* flattering people to gain advantage. [17]But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: [18]how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. [19]These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

Maintain Your Life with God

[20]But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, [21]keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

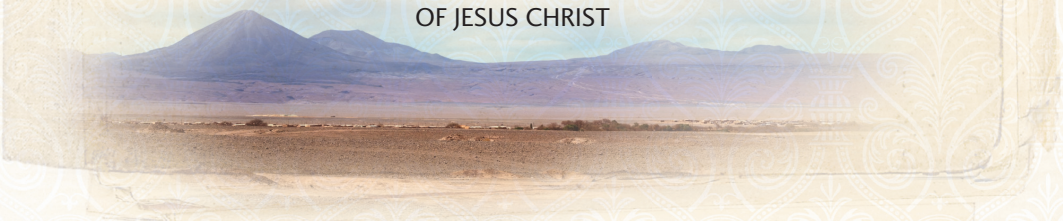
[22]And on some have compassion, making a distinction;[a] [23]but others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire,[a] hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

Glory to God

[24] Now to Him who is able to keep you[a]
 from stumbling,
 And to present *you* faultless
 Before the presence of His glory with
 exceeding joy,
[25] To God our Savior,[a]
 Who alone is wise,[b]
 Be glory and majesty,
 Dominion and power,[c]
 Both now and forever.
 Amen.

22 [a]NU-Text reads *who are doubting* (or *making distinctions*). **23** [a]NU-Text adds *and on some have mercy with fear* and omits *with fear* in first clause. **24** [a]M-Text reads *them.* **25** [a]NU-Text reads *To the only God our Savior.* [b]NU-Text omits *Who . . . is wise* and adds *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.* [c]NU-Text adds *Before all time.*

THE Revelation OF JESUS CHRIST



Introduction and Benediction

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which
God gave Him to show His servants—
things which must shortly take place. And
He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His
servant John, [2]who bore witness to the word
of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ,
to all things that he saw. [3]Blessed *is* he who
reads and those who hear the words of this
prophecy, and keep those things which are
written in it; for the time *is* near.

Greeting the Seven Churches

[4]John, to the seven churches which are
in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who
is and who was and who is to come, and
from the seven Spirits who are before His
throne, [5]and from Jesus Christ, the faithful
witness, the firstborn from the dead, and
the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed[a] us
from our sins in His own blood, [6]and has
made us kings[a] and priests to His God and
Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion for-
ever and ever. Amen.

[7]Behold, He is coming with clouds,
and every eye will see Him, even they who
pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth
will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

[8]"I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the*
Beginning and *the* End,"[a] says the Lord,[b]
"who is and who was and who is to come,
the Almighty."

Vision of the Son of Man

[9]I, John, both[a] your brother and com-
panion in the tribulation and kingdom and
patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island
that is called Patmos for the word of God
and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. [10]I was
in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard
behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,
[11]saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the First and the Last,"[a] and, "What you
see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven
churches which are in Asia:[b] to Ephesus, to
Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis,
to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

[12]Then I turned to see the voice that
spoke with me. And having turned I saw
seven golden lampstands, [13]and in the midst
of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son
of Man, clothed with a garment down to
the feet and girded about the chest with a
golden band. [14]His head and hair *were* white
like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like
a flame of fire; [15]His feet *were* like fine brass,
as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as
the sound of many waters; [16]He had in His
right hand seven stars, out of His mouth
went a sharp two-edged sword, and His
countenance *was* like the sun shining in its
strength. [17]And when I saw Him, I fell at His
feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on
me, saying to me,[a] "Do not be afraid; I am
the First and the Last. [18]I *am* He who lives,
and was dead, and behold, I am alive forev-
ermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades
and of Death. [19]Write[a] the things which you
have seen, and the things which are, and the
things which will take place after this. [20]The
mystery of the seven stars which you saw in
My right hand, and the seven golden lamp-
stands: The seven stars are the angels of the
seven churches, and the seven lampstands
which you saw[a] are the seven churches.

The Loveless Church

2 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus
write,

'These things says He who holds the

1:5 [a]NU-Text reads *loves us and freed;* M-Text reads *loves us and washed.* **1:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *a kingdom.* **1:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *the Beginning and the End.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text add *God.* **1:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *both.* **1:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *I am* through third *and.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *which are in Asia.* **1:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.* **1:19** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Therefore, write.* **1:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *which you saw.*

The White Stone

GLORIA GAITHER

"Mary."
My identity was in his voice.
He had said my name the first day I
met him.
He had said it more than once—
seven times, in fact, until all my
other selves
dissolved, one by one, at the sound of
his voice
and all that was left was my pure self.
"Mary."
I had been pulled apart and splintered
by groping hands that sullied me
and violated all my private places.
They had ripped at my soul, too,
demanding allegiances from me
until I had nothing left to give myself.
But his voice, like a magnet,
drew my heart upward
away from the grindings and shards
until I emerged—not some battered
remnant—
but a sculpture of platinum, polished
and perfect.
His voice did that.
One final time that day he said my
name: "Mary."
It was then his eyes met mine.
His gaze was direct, and for the first time,
mine was clear.
I knew he wanted nothing else from me
except that I be returned
to myself.
I know these words are overused—
And badly used—
But I was pure again
and clean
and true.
He had returned to me my virginity of soul.
He had given me back my innocence.
All the carnal knowledge I had had
was known by my counterfeit selves,
those demons that had torn
for themselves
pieces of my flesh.
But they were gone—destroyed and
abolished forever
by his voice.
His eyes now looked at the Mary
that stood released before him.
From then on I followed him.
I was parented by his authority,
schooled by his words,
familied by his followers.
I was safe as a child in his presence
to start again and grow up in the art of
being
my shameless self
until that night when he was taken
and his abuse began.
It was then I realized my presence
was powerless to protect him
as he had protected me.
I watched—helpless—as he,
quiet as a lamb, submitted to cruelties
and finally death by the cross.
I had known shame and it brought me low.
But he wore the shame of
capital humiliation
and the mockery of a pseudo-crown
the crude soldiers made from
thorn branches
as if it were his destiny and his triumph.
Though I could hardly bear to watch
what all they did;
neither could I bear to leave him.
I stayed.
I stayed until good Joseph returned

with permission to claim his
mutilated body.
I stayed and helped to temporarily fix
him for the tomb.
Even still I could not leave.
I stayed with Mary, perched there on the
knoll
where we could see the tomb.
Our presence made the grave guards
nervous.
They secured, with a seal, the stone.
Until the last rays of sunset drove us
home to Sabbath,
we stayed, and even then
my heart was stayed on him.
Even in the fore-dawn darkness that first
day morning
we had everything ready—spices and
cloths—
to return to give him a proper burial.
We waited on the knoll again
for the sun to release us from
the Sabbath.
Together we worried about the stone
and seal.
Then there was a light. Beyond light.
It was not the dawn, but some greater
light,
descending as if it were a dove from
heaven,
and settling on the tomb,
focusing there so intensely we couldn't
see the stone.
When, finally, we could bear to look at it,
the stone was rolled from the opening,
and the light—we now could see—
was a person sitting on the stone
who radiated light and spoke to us.
"Why are you looking for Life
in such a dying place?" the bright person
said to us.
"He is not here. Go tell the others;
He is alive."
We couldn't believe what he
was saying.
We ran to check inside the tomb.
The cloths we had used to wrap that
tattered body
were still there, stained with his blood,
but the body was gone.
The others started running
toward town,
but I held back, maybe looking
for proof.
I saw the gardener, though I
must admit
my eyes were so full of tears,
I couldn't make out his features
at first.
"What have you done with my Lord?" I
blurted.
"Just tell me so I can go to him."
I could feel myself coming apart, splin-
tering again.
I teetered somewhere between
wanting to believe
I'd always be safe in his presence
and wondering if I'd made the whole
thing up.
Then I heard it again—certain,
pure, true—
"Mary."
Like clouds blowing away after a storm
to reveal the sun,
the apprehensions turned to trust at
that word,
and I was home again.
"My Lord," was all I could say.

And I will give him a white stone,
and on the stone a new name written
which no one knows except him
who receives it.
REVELATION 2:17

The white stone with a new name, unique to me, written upon it: I will have this if I overcome. And with it I will be sustained with hidden manna. "Why are you so strong?" they will ask. "Why haven't you buckled under the stress? You seem so regular, so human." And I will know they are right, but I'll also know a secret—that I have been nourished in a hidden way, from the inside with a perfect nutrition of the spirit that is infused only when I need it, only when I use it. And in the end I will carry my white stone to the New Land where, with my fellow over-comers, I will build an alabaster altar where we will together bow and give thanks for the journey and for the place to which it has brought us—into the very presence of God Himself. And He shall wipe away every tear . . . forever.



seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:
2"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. 5Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. 6But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '

The Persecuted Church

8"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,

'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. 10Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." '

The Compromising Church

12"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan

dwells. 14But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.[a] 16Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

17"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*." '

The Corrupt Church

18"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 19"I know your works, love, service, faith,[a] and your patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first. 20Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow[a] that woman[b] Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce[c] My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.[a] 22Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their[a] deeds. 23I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

24"Now to you I say, and[a] to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will[b] put on you no other burden. 25But hold fast what you have till I come. 26And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

27 *'He shall rule them with a rod of iron;*
They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'[a]—

as I also have received from My Father; 28and I will give him the morning star.

29"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

The Dead Church

3 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,

'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.[a] 3Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. 4You[a] have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

6"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

The Faithful Church

7"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, *"He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens"*:[a] 8"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it;[a] for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before

2:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *likewise* for *which thing I hate*. **2:19** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *faith, service*. **2:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *I have against you that you tolerate*. [b]M-Text reads *your wife Jezebel*. [c]NU-Text and M-Text read *and teaches and seduces*. **2:21** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality*. **2:22** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *her*. **2:24** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and*. [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *will*. **2:27** [a]Psalm 2:9 **3:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *My God*. **3:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Nevertheless you have a few names in Sardis*. **3:7** [a]Isaiah 22:22 **3:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *which no one can shut*.

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

REVELATION 3:10–12

It is important to do the assignment for each day, and that assignment has to come from the Lord. We must bite off no more than God gives us. We must do all that God gives us. Manna will fall every day to sustain us, but we must not hoard it or try to turn right around and force-feed it to someone else. We must eat our own manna to receive the energy for today's task. In doing each day what God says to do (and only that), God will build in us a reservoir of experience into which He can dip to minister to others. But no unprocessed wisdom will be used of God. Even a fool can use the wisdom of those whom God has made wise—even if the fool is an infidel.

your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11Behold,[a] I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name.

13"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

The Lukewarm Church

14"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans[a] write,

'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,[a] I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '"

The Throne Room of Heaven

4 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet

3:11 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Behold*. **3:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *in Laodicea*. **3:16** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *hot nor cold*.

speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

2Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne. 3And He who sat there was[a] like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. 4Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns[a] of gold on their heads. 5And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices.[a] Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are the[b] seven Spirits of God.

6Before the throne *there was*[a] a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, *were* four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. 7The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. 8*The* four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

"Holy, holy, holy,[a]
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!"

9Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

11 "You are worthy, O Lord,[a]
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist[b] and were created."

The Lamb Takes the Scroll

5 And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" 3And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

4So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read[a] the scroll, or to look at it. 5But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose[a] its seven seals."

6And I looked, and behold,[a] in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

And they sang a new song, saying:
"You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
REVELATION 5:9

Worthy Is the Lamb

8Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

4:3 [a]M-Text omits *And He who sat there was* (which makes the description in verse 3 modify the throne rather than God). **4:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *robes, with crowns.* **4:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *voices, and thunderings.* [b]M-Text omits *the.* **4:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *something like.* **4:8** [a]M-Text has *holy* nine times. **4:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *our Lord and God.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *existed.* **5:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and read.* **5:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to loose.* **5:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *I saw in the midst . . . a Lamb standing.*

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

REVELATION 5:11, 12

Charles Wesley traveled a long voyage—literally and figuratively—on his way to saving faith in Jesus (see p. 1394), and so in celebration of his one-year anniversary of knowing Christ, he did what he would go on to do more than six thousand times throughout the course of life: he wrote a song. The hymn had originally been titled by Wesley "For the Anniversary Day of One's Conversion" and contains eighteen stanzas chronicling his journey to faith, including his detour of legalism: "Sudden expired the legal strife; 'twas then I ceased to grieve; my second, real, living life I then began to live." The version of the hymn most popular today begins on the seventh verse, beginning, "O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise." These lines were inspired by a spiritual mentor of Wesley's, Peter Bohler, who had once said, "Had I a thousand tongues I would praise Him with them all." Wesley may have not have had a thousand tongues himself, but through the years his songs have certainly set more than a thousand tongues singing the praises of Jesus.

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Charles Wesley | 1739

1. O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

2. Jesus! The name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

3. He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.

4. Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Savior come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

5. My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name.

10 And have made us[a] kings[b] and priests
to our God;
And we[c] shall reign on the earth."

11Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12saying with a loud voice:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and
wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and
blessing!"

13And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

"Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"[a]

14Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four[a] elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.[b]

First Seal: The Conqueror

6 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals;[a] and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

Second Seal: Conflict on Earth

3When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see."[a] 4Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Third Seal: Scarcity on Earth

5When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart[a] of wheat for a denarius,[b] and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

Fourth Seal: Widespread Death on Earth

7When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs

9When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were,* was completed.

Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

12I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold,[a] there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon[b] became like blood. 13And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders,[a] the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

5:10 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *them.* [b]NU-Text reads *a kingdom.* [c]NU-Text and M-Text read *they.* **5:13** [a]M-Text adds *Amen.* **5:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *twenty-four.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Him who lives forever and ever.* **6:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *seven seals.* **6:3** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and see.* **6:6** [a]Greek *choinix;* that is, approximately one quart [b]This was approximately one day's wage for a worker. **6:12** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *behold.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *the whole moon.* **6:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the commanders, the rich men.*

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall
on us and hide us from the face of Him who
sits on the throne and from the wrath of
the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath
has come, and who is able to stand?"

The Sealed of Israel

7 After these things I saw four angels
standing at the four corners of the earth,
holding the four winds of the earth, that
the wind should not blow on the earth, on
the sea, or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another
angel ascending from the east, having the
seal of the living God. And he cried with
a loud voice to the four angels to whom it
was granted to harm the earth and the sea,
3 saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or
the trees till we have sealed the servants of
our God on their foreheads." 4 And I heard
the number of those who were sealed. One
hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the
tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:

5 of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand
were sealed;[a]
of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand
were sealed;
of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand
were sealed;
6 of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand
were sealed;
of the tribe of Naphtali twelve
thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Manasseh twelve
thousand *were* sealed;
7 of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand
were sealed;
of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand
were sealed;
of the tribe of Issachar twelve
thousand *were* sealed;
8 of the tribe of Zebulun twelve
thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand
were sealed;
of the tribe of Benjamin twelve
thousand *were* sealed.

A Multitude from the Great Tribulation

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a
great multitude which no one could number,
of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues,
standing before the throne and before the
Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm
branches in their hands, 10 and crying out
with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs*
to our God who sits on the throne, and to
the Lamb!" 11 All the angels stood around the
throne and the elders and the four living
creatures, and fell on their faces before the
throne and worshiped God, 12 saying:

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power
and might,
Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen."

13 Then one of the elders answered, say-
ing to me, "Who are these arrayed in white
robes, and where did they come from?"
14 And I said to him, "Sir,[a] you know."
So he said to me, "These are the ones
who come out of the great tribulation, and
washed their robes and made them white in
the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore they are
before the throne of God, and serve Him day
and night in His temple. And He who sits on
the throne will dwell among them. 16 They
shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst
anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor
any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst
of the throne will shepherd them and lead
them to living fountains of waters.[a] And God
will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Seventh Seal: Prelude to the Seven Trumpets

8 When He opened the seventh seal,
there was silence in heaven for about
half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels
who stand before God, and to them were
given seven trumpets. 3 Then another angel,
having a golden censer, came and stood
at the altar. He was given much incense,
that he should offer *it* with the prayers of
all the saints upon the golden altar which
was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of
the incense, with the prayers of the saints,
ascended before God from the angel's
hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer,
filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it*
to the earth. And there were noises, thun-
derings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

7:5 [a]In NU-Text and M-Text *were sealed* is stated only in verses 5a and 8c; the words are understood in the remainder of the passage. **7:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *My lord.* **7:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *to fountains of the waters of life.*

Gospel Songs

So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

REVELATION 7:14

TURN ON your TV these days and you're bound to see someone hawking the latest miracle cleaner. You'll hear men shout about innovations with the newest, most revolutionary stain-fighting power—natural enzymes, oxidization, or even magic—all guaranteed to eliminate even the toughest stains. But there's no manmade solution for the stain of sin. We can scrub and work and philosophize, but we'll never come up with the right formula that will make our sin vanish. That power can only come from Jesus' blood. Lewis Jones wrote of this "wonder working power" at a camp meeting in Maryland. As a graduate of Moody Bible Institute (he was classmates with famed evangelist Billy Sunday), he was well versed in the New Testament. But aside from his academic knowledge of Jesus, he knew personally the cleansing from sin that Christ's blood performs. He knew that salvation that not only cleanses us from our sin but also empowers us to "live daily His praises to sing." Oh, there's wonderful power in that blood!



There Is Power in the Blood

Lewis Jones, 1899

Would you be free from the burden of sin?
There's power in the blood, power in the blood;
Would you o'er evil a victory win?
There's wonderful power in the blood.

Refrain:
There is power, power, wonder working power
In the blood of the Lamb;
There is power, power, wonder working power
In the precious blood of the Lamb.

Would you be free from your passion and pride?
There's power in the blood, power in the blood;
Come for a cleansing to Calvary's tide;
There's wonderful power in the blood.

Refrain

Would you be whiter, much whiter than snow?
There's power in the blood, power in the blood;
Sin stains are lost in its life giving flow.
There's wonderful power in the blood.

Refrain

Would you do service for Jesus your King?
There's power in the blood, power in the blood;
Would you live daily His praises to sing?
There's wonderful power in the blood.

Refrain

[6]So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

First Trumpet: Vegetation Struck

[7]The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth.[a] And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Second Trumpet: The Seas Struck

[8]Then the second angel sounded: And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. [9]And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Third Trumpet: The Waters Struck

[10]Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. [11]The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

Fourth Trumpet: The Heavens Struck

[12]Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

[13]And I looked, and I heard an angel[a] flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Fifth Trumpet: The Locusts from the Bottomless Pit

9 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. [2]And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. [3]Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. [4]They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. [5]And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment them *for* five months. Their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. [6]In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

[7]The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces *were* like the faces of men. [8]They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' *teeth.* [9]And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings *was* like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. [10]They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was* to hurt men five months. [11]And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

[12]One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

Sixth Trumpet: The Angels from the Euphrates

[13]Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, [14]saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." [15]So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. [16]Now the number of the army of the horsemen *was* two hundred million; I heard the number of them. [17]And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses *were* like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. [18]By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. [19]For their power[a] is in their mouth and in their tails;

8:7 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *and a third of the earth was burned up.* **8:13** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *eagle.* **9:19** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the power of the horses.*

for their tails *are* like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

20But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries[a] or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

The Mighty Angel with the Little Book

10 I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow *was* on his head, his face *was* like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. 2He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and *his* left *foot* on the land, 3and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices,[a] I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,[b] "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

5The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand[a] to heaven 6and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, 7but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

John Eats the Little Book

8Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth."

9So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book."

And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

10Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. 11And he[a] said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

The Two Witnesses

11 Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood,[a] saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. 2But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot *for* forty-two months. 3And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

4These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God[a] of the earth. 5And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

The Witnesses Killed

7When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. 8And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our[a] Lord was crucified. 9Then *those* from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow[a] their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

The Witnesses Resurrected

11Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear

9:21 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *drugs*. **10:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *sounded*. [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me*. **10:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *right hand*. **10:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *they*. **11:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *And the angel stood*. **11:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Lord*. **11:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *their*. **11:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *nations see . . . and will not allow*.

fell on those who saw them. 12And they[a] heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. 13In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed

15Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms[a] of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" 16And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17saying:

"We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
The One who is and who was and who is to come,[a]
Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.
18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

11:12 [a]M-Text reads *I*. **11:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *kingdom . . . has become*. **11:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and who is to come*.



JUDY MARTIN HESS • Homecoming Artist, *The Martins*

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. | REVELATION 12:11

I have had a lifelong battle with depression. Feeling scattered and disconnected were a part of my everyday life. After years of hopelessness and frustration, at the age of twenty-three I began my journey towards wholeness.

It has been a process that began with godly counsel that taught me how to deal with my spiritual and emotional issues. For me, medication has been another step in managing my depression. The most recent step, and without a doubt the most pivotal, was the choice to be honest and share my struggle in our concerts from the stage.

My testimony that I have to get up every day and trade what I feel (my depression) for the truth—"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13)—has made me stronger and has helped others who also struggle with depression.

There was something empowering about laying it all out on the table and seeing it connect with others going through similar challenges that made me feel that I was finally beginning to overcome "by the blood of the Lamb on the word of [my] testimony."

19 Then the temple of God was opened
in heaven, and the ark of His covenant[a] was
seen in His temple. And there were light-
nings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake,
and great hail.

The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

12 Now a great sign appeared in heaven:
a woman clothed with the sun, with
the moon under her feet, and on her head
a garland of twelve stars. 2 Then being with
child, she cried out in labor and in pain to
give birth.
3 And another sign appeared in heaven:
behold, a great, fiery red dragon having
seven heads and ten horns, and seven dia-
dems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third
of the stars of heaven and threw them to
the earth. And the dragon stood before
the woman who was ready to give birth, to
devour her Child as soon as it was born.
5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all
nations with a rod of iron. And her Child
was caught up to God and His throne.
6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness,
where she has a place prepared by God,
that they should feed her there one thou-
sand two hundred and sixty days.

Satan Thrown Out of Heaven

7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael
and his angels fought with the dragon; and
the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they
did not prevail, nor was a place found for
them[a] in heaven any longer. 9 So the great
dragon was cast out, that serpent of old,
called the Devil and Satan, who deceives
the whole world; he was cast to the earth,
and his angels were cast out with him.
10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in
heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and
the kingdom of our God, and the power
of His Christ have come, for the accuser
of our brethren, who accused them before
our God day and night, has been cast down.
11 And they overcame him by the blood of
the Lamb and by the word of their testi-
mony, and they did not love their lives to the
death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and
you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabit-
ants of the earth and the sea! For the devil
has come down to you, having great wrath,
because he knows that he has a short time."

The Woman Persecuted

13 Now when the dragon saw that he had
been cast to the earth, he persecuted the
woman who gave birth to the male *Child.*
14 But the woman was given two wings of
a great eagle, that she might fly into the
wilderness to her place, where she is nour-
ished for a time and times and half a time,
from the presence of the serpent. 15 So the
serpent spewed water out of his mouth
like a flood after the woman, that he might
cause her to be carried away by the flood.
16 But the earth helped the woman, and the
earth opened its mouth and swallowed up
the flood which the dragon had spewed
out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was
enraged with the woman, and he went to
make war with the rest of her offspring,
who keep the commandments of God and
have the testimony of Jesus Christ.[a]

The Beast from the Sea

13 Then I[a] stood on the sand of the
sea. And I saw a beast rising up out
of the sea, having seven heads and ten
horns,[b] and on his horns ten crowns, and
on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now
the beast which I saw was like a leopard,
his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his
mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon
gave him his power, his throne, and great
authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as
if it had been mortally wounded, and his
deadly wound was healed. And all the
world marveled and followed the beast.
4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave
authority to the beast; and they worshiped
the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast?
Who is able to make war with him?"
5 And he was given a mouth speaking
great things and blasphemies, and he was
given authority to continue[a] for forty-
two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth
in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme
His name, His tabernacle, and those who
dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to
make war with the saints and to overcome
them. And authority was given him over
every tribe,[a] tongue, and nation. 8 All who

11:19 [a]M-Text reads *the covenant of the Lord.* **12:8** [a]M-Text reads *him.* **12:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Christ.* **13:1** [a]NU-Text reads *he.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *ten horns and seven heads.* **13:5** [a]M-Text reads *make war.* **13:7** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *and people.*

HYMNS

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!"

REVELATION 15:3

In the 1930s, English missionary Stuart Hine and his wife were working in the Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Europe when they first heard a Russian hymn by Ivan Prokhanoff called "Mighty God." (That hymn had itself been an adaptation of a Swedish poem, "O Store Gud" by Carl Boberg.) Hine was moved by the hymn, which spoke of the wonder and awe of the Lord, and so he was inspired to begin composing his own hymn honoring the God who sculpted the vast Carpathian Mountains, who formed the gentle mountain streams, and who sent His Son to die for the sins of the world—including for those souls whom Hine and his wife had come to serve in the Carpathian Mountains. Hine found that when he shared this message of hope with them, they were amazed at hearing for the first time that God loved them. Keeping these experiences in mind, over the next fourteen years, Hine crafted his hymn and finally published it under the title "How Great Thou Art" in his magazine, *Grace and Peace,* in 1949.

Hine's hymn eventually caught the attention of gospel singer George Beverly Shea while he was in London with Billy Graham, and the next year, they started singing it at Graham's Crusades. In fact, at the New York City Crusade of 1957, Shea led the crowd in singing the hymn ninety-nine times, almost like a preview of the day when "Christ shall come with shout of acclamation." For what possible response could we have but "My God, how great Thou art!"

How Great Thou Art

Stuart K. Hine | 1949

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the *worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the *rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:

Refrain:
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee:
How great thou art! How great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:

Refrain

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:

Refrain

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then *I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, My God, how great thou art!

Refrain

*Author's original words are "works," "mighty" and "shall I bow" (Word changes approved for use in North America.)

Words © 1949 and 1953 by The Stuart Hine Trust. All rights in the U.S.A. except print rights administered by EMI CMG. U.S.A. print rights administered by Hope Publishing Company.

dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The Beast from the Earth

11Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14And he deceives those[a] who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or[a] the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number *is* 666.

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 Then I looked, and behold, a[a] Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, having[b] His Father's name written on their foreheads. 2And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 4These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed[a] from *among* men, *being* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. 5And in their mouth was found no deceit,[a] for they are without fault before the throne of God.[b]

> *They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.*
>
> REVELATION 14:3

The Proclamations of Three Angels

6Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— 7saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

8And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon[a] is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

9Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his

13:14 [a]M-Text reads *my own people.* **13:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *or.* **14:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text add *His name and.* **14:4** [a]M-Text adds *by Jesus.* **14:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *falsehood.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *before the throne of God.* **14:8** [a]NU-Text reads *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, which has made;* M-Text reads *Babylon the great is fallen. She has made.*

image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

12 Here is the patience of the saints;
here *are* those[a] who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,[a] "Write: 'Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'"

"Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You[a] to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

17 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." 19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

Prelude to the Bowl Judgments

15 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

2 And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark[a] *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having

> *They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!*
>
> REVELATION 15:3

harps of God. 3 They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

"Great and marvelous *are* Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true *are* Your ways,
O King of the saints![a]
4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and
glorify Your name?
For *You* alone *are* holy.
For all nations shall come and worship
before You,
For Your judgments have been
manifested."

5 After these things I looked, and behold,[a] the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. 7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. 8 The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls[a] of the wrath of God on the earth."

First Bowl: Loathsome Sores

2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had

14:12 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *here are those.* **14:13** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.* **14:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *for You.* **15:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *over his mark.* **15:3** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *nations.* **15:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *behold.* **16:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *seven bowls.*

the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Second Bowl: The Sea Turns to Blood

3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead *man;* and every living creature in the sea died.

Third Bowl: The Waters Turn to Blood

4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying:

"You are righteous, O Lord,[a]
The One who is and who was and who is to be,[b]
Because You have judged these things.
6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
And You have given them blood to drink.
For[a] it is their just due."

7 And I heard another from[a] the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* Your judgments."

Fourth Bowl: Men Are Scorched

8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

Fifth Bowl: Darkness and Pain

10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

Sixth Bowl: Euphrates Dried Up

12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and[a] of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.[a]

Seventh Bowl: The Earth Utterly Shaken

17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. 19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me,[a] "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations

16:5 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *O Lord.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *who was, the Holy One.* **16:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *For.* **16:7** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *another from.* **16:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of the earth and.* **16:16** [a]M-Text reads *Megiddo.* **17:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.*

and the filthiness of her fornication.[a] 5And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH.

6I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast

7But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 8The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.[a]

9"Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. 10There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. 11The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

12"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. 14These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful."

15Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 16And the ten horns which you saw on[a] the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. 18And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

The Fall of Babylon the Great

18 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2And he cried mightily[a] with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

4And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5For her sins have reached[a] to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6Render to her just as she rendered to you,[a] and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. 7In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit *as* queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' 8Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong *is* the Lord God who judges[a] her.

The World Mourns Babylon's Fall

9"The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

17:4 [a]M-Text reads *the filthiness of the fornication of the earth.* **17:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *and shall be present.* **17:16** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *saw, and the beast.* **18:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *mightily.* **18:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *have been heaped up.* **18:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to you.* **18:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *has judged.*

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

REVELATION 19:7–9

Think of your best memories: vacations, holidays, family gatherings, life-altering conversations, relations, joyful happenings. More likely than not, they involved food. Perhaps it was a picnic by the lake, or maybe one of the gatherings around the table at Grandma's house. Was it that delicious habit of sharing a cold watermelon on the front porch on a hot afternoon, or the barbecues at a favorite uncle's backyard after a family game of football or volleyball?

Could it be that more barriers are broken down around the kitchen table than around the conference table? Could more church disagreements be mended if we still had more all-day singings with dinner on the grounds and fewer finance committee meetings?

In a society more and more drawn to the virtual reality of electronic games and less and less to the face-to-face reality of a lively discussion around the family or community table, could it be that more relationships might be restored or initiated if we all took the time to extend an invitation to join us for supper or stop by for coffee.

It's no accident that while we are here, the Great Shepherd has promised to prepare a table before us—even in the presence of enemies—and to spread for us, His bride, a great marriage supper when we finally get home.

[11]"And the merchants of the earth will
weep and mourn over her, for no one buys
their merchandise anymore: [12]merchan-
dise of gold and silver, precious stones and
pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scar-
let, every kind of citron wood, every kind of
object of ivory, every kind of object of most
precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble;
[13]and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil
and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour
and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and
chariots, and bodies and souls of men. [14]The
fruit that your soul longed for has gone
from you, and all the things which are rich
and splendid have gone from you,[a] and you
shall find them no more at all. [15]The mer-
chants of these things, who became rich by
her, will stand at a distance for fear of her
torment, weeping and wailing, [16]and saying,
'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in
fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned
with gold and precious stones and pearls!
[17]For in one hour such great riches came to
nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel
by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on
the sea, stood at a distance [18]and cried out
when they saw the smoke of her burning,
saying, 'What *is* like this great city?'
[19]"They threw dust on their heads and
cried out, weeping and wailing, and say-
ing, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all
who had ships on the sea became rich by
her wealth! For in one hour she is made
desolate.'
[20]"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and *you*
holy apostles[a] and prophets, for God has
avenged you on her!"

Finality of Babylon's Fall

[21]Then a mighty angel took up a stone like
a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea,
saying, "Thus with violence the great city
Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not
be found anymore. [22]The sound of harpists,
musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not
be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of
any craft shall be found in you anymore, and
the sound of a millstone shall not be heard
in you anymore. [23]The light of a lamp shall
not shine in you anymore, and the voice of
bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in

18:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *been lost to you.* **18:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *saints and apostles.*

you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

Heaven Exults over Babylon

19 After these things I heard[a] a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord[b] our God! 2For true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her." 3Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" 4And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" 5Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both[a] small and great!"

6And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the[a] Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." 10And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See *that you do* not *do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Christ on a White Horse

11Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had[a] a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,[a] followed Him on white horses. 15Now out of His mouth goes a sharp[a] sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

The Beast and His Armies Defeated

17Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,[a] 18that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and

19:1 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *something like.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *the Lord.* **19:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *both.* **19:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *our.* **19:12** [a]M-Text adds *names written, and.* **19:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *pure white linen.* **19:15** [a]M-Text adds *two-edged.* **19:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the great supper of God.*



His eyes were like a flame of fire,
and on His head were many crowns.

REVELATION 19:12

When we're standing before Christ's throne, it won't matter who is Catholic and who is Protestant, who is a dispensationalist and who is a postmillennialist, or who even knows what those terms mean. That's because when we're standing before Christ, all that will matter is that He is the King of kings. So it seems only appropriate that a hymn celebrating that very fact, "Crown Him with Many Crowns," was written by two different men in two different decades from two different theological perspectives.

Matthew Bridges had lived all his life as an Anglican and even wrote an entire book arguing against Catholicism, but in an unexpected twist, at age forty-eight he actually converted to Catholicism. A few years later he wrote the original six-verse hymn, including the line, "Crown Him the Lord of peace, whose power a scepter sways from pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise," extolling the day when Christ will unite everyone under the banner of His praise. Twenty-three years later, after the hymn had gained popularity, an Anglican clergyman, Godfrey Thring, feared that by singing the song Anglicans might be affirming Catholic doctrine, and so he set out to write six new verses. Since, various hymnals have published so many different combinations of the twelve verses that the most commonly sung version these days includes three of Bridges' verses and three of Thring's, with most singers completely unaware of whose verse is whose.

When we're standing before Christ's throne, it won't matter who wrote what hymn or who sang what gospel song, for "the heavenly anthem drowns out all music but its own."

Crown Him with Many Crowns

Matthew Bridges | 1851
Godfrey Thring | 1874

1. Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne.
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.

2. Crown Him the Lord of love, behold His hands and side,
Those wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.

3. Crown Him the Lord of life, who triumphed over the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save.
His glories now we sing, who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

4. Crown Him the Lord of Heaven, enthroned in worlds above,
Crown Him the King to Whom is given the wondrous name of Love.
Crown Him with many crowns, as thrones before Him fall;
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns, for He is King of all.

5. Crown Him the Lord of years, the Potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou has died for me;
Thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.

of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people,* free[a] and slave, both small and great."

19And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Satan Bound 1,000 Years

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

The Saints Reign with Christ 1,000 Years

4And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a[a] thousand years. 5But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. 6Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

19:18 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *both free.* **20:4** [a]M-Text reads *the.*



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." | REVELATION 21:5

"Nothing is as beautiful as something that has been restored," Raylene, our guest, said as she stood looking at the outlandish old mirror we had just had restored and finally had the courage to hang over the mantel. Our house is filled with old, huge, *exceedingly* outlandish furniture, but *this* mirror could hold its own, even so!

Several years ago when Doug and I came to that crisis time that many couples come to, we went the usual route of separation and sorrow. However, the Lord undertook an enormous restoration project and with unique and perfect timing put us first as individuals, and then our marriage, back together. We then set about seriously building a life together and making a home. We bought a big old rundown house that needed everything. We began to repair and restore, just like we were doing with our minds and emotions.

Satanic Rebellion Crushed

7 Now when the thousand years have
expired, Satan will be released from his
prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations
which are in the four corners of the earth,
Gog and Magog, to gather them together to
battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the
sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the
earth and surrounded the camp of the saints
and the beloved city. And fire came down
from God out of heaven and devoured them.
10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into
the lake of fire and brimstone where[a] the
beast and the false prophet *are.* And they will
be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Great White Throne Judgment

11 Then I saw a great white throne and
Him who sat on it, from whose face the
earth and the heaven fled away. And there
was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the
dead, small and great, standing before God,[a]
and books were opened. And another book
was opened, which is *the Book* of Life. And
the dead were judged according to their
works, by the things which were written in
the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who
were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up
the dead who were in them. And they were
judged, each one according to his works.
14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the
lake of fire. This is the second death.[a] 15 And
anyone not found written in the Book of Life
was cast into the lake of fire.

All Things Made New

21 Now I saw a new heaven and a new
earth, for the first heaven and the
first earth had passed away. Also there was
no more sea. 2 Then I, John,[a] saw the holy
city, New Jerusalem, coming down out
of heaven from God, prepared as a bride
adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a
loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold,
the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and
He will dwell with them, and they shall be

20:10 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *also.* **20:12** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the throne.* **20:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *the lake of fire.* **21:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *John.*

We bought big old cheap furniture and applied the same principle—repair and restore. We took trips together in the States and overseas and looked at and loved everything that anybody else had restored. I think it fair to say that half the travel industry is built on people visiting restored homes, ruins, paintings, and whole historical areas. Preservers set about restoring something to its original glory. This whole attitude is one that enriches our lives in a thousand ways.

But God, in His infinite love, goes us one better. When He restores, He doesn't have for His goal the original glory. His goal is to make everything better than it ever was or ever could be. He makes all things new. Human beings in their best natural state are still imperfect, sinning people. But a person saved and restored can be a new creation and a glorious saint. A marriage in its best natural state is still filled with carnal pride and strife. But a marriage that has gone through the fire and had the water of God's love quench the fire and wash it clean has the capacity to be a resting place and a healing place for the couple themselves and for other people as well.

There truly is nothing "as beautiful as something that has been restored." And God is the Master of restoration.

His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. 4And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me,[a] "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

6And He said to me, "It is done![a] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7He who overcomes shall inherit all things,[a] and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8But the cowardly, unbelieving,[a] abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

The New Jerusalem

9Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me[a] and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."[b] 10And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy[a] Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12Also she had a great

21:5 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.* **21:6** [a]M-Text omits *It is done.* **21:7** [a]M-Text reads *overcomes, I shall give him these things.* **21:8** [a]M-Text adds *and sinners.* **21:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.* [b]M-Text reads *I will show you the woman, the Lamb's bride.* **21:10** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *the great* and read *the holy city, Jerusalem.*



LAURA LEE OLDHAM • Author, Wife of Homecoming Artist Doug Oldham

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. | REVELATION 21:22

These words are part of John's revelation, spoken about the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, that came down from God out of heaven.

Our earthly need for a special *place* to worship God will cease to be. The One we have sought to honor and to worship with these special buildings will be there and literally be the temple personified. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb *are* the temple.

All the tent tabernacles, the myriad of small, humble wooden churches, the magnificent abbeys and chapels of Europe, the beautiful Spanish missions, the thousands of spires all across our earth have been but a way for our worshiping spirits to walk, like stepping stones over water, bringing us closer and closer and ultimately into the glorious presence of the almighty God and the Lamb, the true temple.

This is where our journey is leading us—into the glorious presence of Him who was and is and ever shall be. The Alpha and the Omega.

The need for building will be past. We will be with the Living Presence, the true temple!

Selah! Which is to say, "Let it be so!"

and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: [13]three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

[14]Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names[a] of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. [15]And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. [16]The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. [17]Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. [18]The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass. [19]The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation *was* jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, [20]the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. [21]The twelve gates *were* twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city *was* pure gold, like transparent glass.

The Glory of the New Jerusalem

[22]But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. [23]The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it,[a] for the glory[b] of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. [24]And the nations of those who are saved[a] shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.[b] [25]Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). [26]And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.[a] [27]But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes[a] an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The River of Life

22 And he showed me a pure[a] river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. [2]In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. [3]And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. [4]They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads. [5]There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

The Time Is Near

[6]Then he said to me, "These words *are* faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy[a] prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

[7]"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

[8]Now I, John, saw and heard[a] these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

[9]Then he said to me, "See *that you do* not *do that*. For[a] I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." [10]And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. [11]He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous[a] still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

Jesus Testifies to the Churches

[12]"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. [13]I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last."[a]

[14]Blessed *are* those who do His commandments,[a] that they may have the

21:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *twelve names*. **21:23** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *in it*. [b]M-Text reads *the very glory*. **21:24** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of those who are saved*. [b]M-Text reads *the glory and honor of the nations to Him*. **21:26** [a]M-Text adds *that they may enter in*. **21:27** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *anything profane, nor one who causes*. **22:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *pure*. **22:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *spirits of the prophets*. **22:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *am the one who heard and saw*. **22:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *For*. **22:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *do right*. **22:13** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End*. **22:14** [a]NU-Text reads *wash their robes*.

right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15But[a] outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

16"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

17And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

A Warning

18For[a] I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add[b] to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away[a] his part from the Book[b] of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

I Am Coming Quickly

20He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly."

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

21The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all.[a] Amen.

22:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *But*. **22:18** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *For*. [b]M-Text reads *may God add*. **22:19** [a]M-Text reads *may God take away*. [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *tree of life*. **22:21** [a]NU-Text reads *with all;* M-Text reads *with all the saints*.





SONGS IN THE

Gaither Homecoming Bible

All Creatures of Our God and King 3
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name. 1533
All the Way My Savior Leads Me 167
Amazing Grace 465
And Can It Be That I Should Gain 1395
Be Thou My Vision 109
Because He Lives 1436
Come, Thou Almighty King 1055
Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing. 313
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus 1129
Crown Him with Many Crowns 1663
Does Jesus Care? 1613
The Family of God 1386
Fully Alive 1340
Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken. 681
God Will Take Care of You 149
Go Ask 1232
Go, Tell It on the Mountain. 1261
Going Home 1582
Great Is Thy Faithfulness 979
Hallelujah, What Savior 875
He Touched Me 1214
His Eye Is on the Sparrow 1281
Holy, Holy, Holy 813
How Great Thou Art 1655
I Am Loved. 798
I Could Never Outlove the Lord 1476
I Love to Tell the Story 1209
I Need Thee Every Hour. 677
I Surrender All 1287
I Will Go On 1536
I'll Worship Only at the Feet of Jesus. 1068
In the Garden. 1369
It Is Well with My Soul 415
It's Beginning to Rain 1082
I've Just Seen Jesus 1374

Joy Comes in the Morning 618
Joy Unspeakable 1609
Just as I Am 1329
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms 239
Let's Just Praise the Lord 1512
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling 1619
Loving God, Loving Each Other 1354
The Love of God 941
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God 640
My Faith Has Found a Resting Place 1575
My Jesus, I Love Thee 1627
O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing 1645
O God, Our Help in Ages Past 685
O Sacred Head, Now Wounded 1249
O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus 1521
The Old Rugged Cross 1323
The Old Rugged Cross Made the Difference 1494
Peace Be Still 1222
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty 731
Praise You 724
Rescue the Perishing 1635
Rock of Ages 117
Safe in the Arms of Jesus 1241
Softly and Tenderly 1177
Something Beautiful 782
The Stage Is Bare 1466
Sweet Hour of Prayer 1051
Take My Life and Let It Be 505
Thanks to Calvary (I Don't Live Here Anymore) 1398
There Is a Fountain 1139
There Is Power in the Blood 1649
There's Something About that Name 1334
This Could Be the Dawning of that Day 1430
Through 858
'Tis So Sweet 565
Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus 1591
Unshakable Kingdom 1542
What a Friend We Have in Jesus 1487
Whispering Hope 13

Acknowledgments

Page 60, "Please Forgive Me" by Gerald Crabb © 1997 Chestnut Mound Music (BMI). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Page 618, "Joy Comes in the Morning" by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1974 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 724, "Praise You" by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1980 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 782, "Something Beautiful" by William J. Gaither © 1966 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 798, "I Am Loved" by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1978 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 858, "Through" by William J. and Gloria Gaither and Michael Sykes © 2006 Gaither Music Company and Mal 'N Al Music (admin. by Gaither Copyright Management). All rights reserved.

Page 1068, "I'll Worship Only at the Feet of Jesus" by William J. and Gloria Gaither and J.D. Miller © 1991 by Gaither Music Company, Life Gate Music, and Lojon Music (admin. by Gaither Copyright Management). All rights reserved.

Page 1082, "It's Beginning to Rain" by William J. and Gloria Gaither and C. Aaron Wilburn © 1979 by William J. Gaither and Word Music LLC. All rights reserved.

Page 1102, "The Hope in Music" taken from *Homecoming Magazine*. Used by permission

Page 1214, "He Touched Me" by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1964 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1222, "Peace Be Still" by William J. and Gloria Gaither and J.D. Miller © by Gaither Music Company and Shepherd's Fold Music (admin. By EMI Christian Music Group). All rights reserved.

Page 1232, "Go Ask" by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1987 by Gaither Music Company. All rights reserved.

Page 1334, "There's Something About That Name" by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1970 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1340, "Fully Alive" by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1983 by Gaither Music Company. All rights reserved.

Page 1351, "He Washed My Feet" by Rodney Griffin © 1998 Songs of Greater Vision, BMI. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Page 1354, “Loving God, Loving Each Other” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1997 by Gaither Music Company. All rights reserved.

Page 1374, “I’ve Just Seen Jesus” by William J. and Gloria Gaither and Danny Daniels © 1984 by Gaither Music Company and Ariose Music (admin. By EMI Christian Music Group). All rights reserved.

Page 1386, “The Family of God” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1970 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1398, “Thanks to Calvary (I Don’t Live Here Anymore)” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1969 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1413, “God Wants to Hear You Sing” by Rodney Griffin © 2009 Songs of Greater Vision, BMI.

Page 1430, “This Could Be the Dawning of that Day” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1971 by Gaither Music Company. All rights reserved.

Page 1436, “Because He Lives” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1971 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1466, “The Stage Is Bare” by William J. and Gloria Gaither, Sandi Patty, and Bill George © 1984 by Gaither Music Company and Sandi’s Songs Music (admin. by Gaither Copyright Management) and New Spring Publishing, Inc./Yellow House Music (admin. by BMG Music Publishing, Inc.). All rights reserved.

Page 1476, “I Could Never Outlove the Lord” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1972 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1494, “The Old Rugged Cross Made the Difference” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1970 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1512, “Let’s Just Praise the Lord” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1972 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1526, “Music: A Lesson in Harmony” taken from *Homecoming Magazine*. Used by permission

Page 1536, “I Will Go On” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1979 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1542, “Unshakable Kingdom” by William and Gloria Gaither and Michael W. Smith © 1985 by Gaither Music Company and Meadowgreen Music Company (admin. By EMI Christian Music Group). All rights reserved.

Page 1552, “Attitude of Gratitude” by Mark Lowry and Benjy Gaither © 2010. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Page 1582, “Going Home” by William J. and Gloria Gaither © 1967 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

Page 1604, “Until Then” by Stuart Hamblen © 1958, Renewed 1986. Hamblen Music Co. All rights Reserved. Used by permission.

Page 1665, “How Great Thou Art” by Stuart Hine © 1949 and 1953 The Stuart Hine Trust. All rights in the U.S.A. except print rights administered by EMI CMG. U.S.A. print rights administered by Hope Publishing Company.

60 DAYS THROUGH THE BIBLE WITH

The Homecoming Family

A two-month overview of the Scriptures,
including Homecoming devotions for every day

1.	Gen. 1:1—3:22	Ed Miller
2.	Gen. 15:1–21; 22:1–19	Ed Miller
3.	Gen. 37:1–36; 39:1—41:57	Ed Miller
4.	Gen. 42:1—45:28	Rebecca Isaacs Bowman
5.	Gen. 47:1–31; 50:1–26	Bill Gaither and Connie Hopper
6.	Ex. 1:1—3:22	Ed Miller
7.	Ex. 4:1—6:13	Gene McDonald
8.	Ex. 12:1–42; 14:1–31	Ed Miller
9.	Ex. 16:1—17:16	Rebecca Isaacs Bowman and Ed Miller
10.	Ex. 19:1—20:21	Bill Gaither
11.	Ex. 33:1—34:35	Gloria Gaither
12.	Deut. 7:1—9:29	Gloria Gaither and Ed Miller
13.	Josh. 1:1—2:24; 6:1–27	Buddy Mullins and Mark Lowry
14.	Josh. 23:1—24:33	Mark Lowry and Dean Hopper
15.	Judg. 4:1—5:31	Ed Miller
16.	Judg. 6:11—7:25; 13:1—16:31	Ed Miller and Mark Lowry
17.	Ruth 1:1—4:22	Ed Miller and Melissa Brady
18.	1 Sam. 1:1—2:11; 17:1—18:30	Buddy Mullins and Gloria Gaither
19.	2 Sam. 1:1—2:7; 7:1–29	Ed Miller
20.	2 Sam. 9:1–13; 11:1—12:25	Kelly Nelon Clark

21.	1 Kin. 18:1—19:21	Reba Rambo-McGuire
22.	Neh. 8:1—9:18	Susan Jackson
23.	Esth. 2:1—3:17; 8:1–17	Tori Taff
24.	Job 1:1—2:13; 23:1–17; 42:1–17	Bill Gaither and Tanya Goodman Sykes
25.	Ps. 1; 4; 23	Gloria Gaither, Connie Hopper, and Laura Lee Oldham
26.	Ps. 18; 27	Destiny Rambo McGuire, Jim Murray, Lily Isaacs, and Ann Downing
27.	Ps. 32; 46; 68	Laura Lee Oldham, Sue Buchanan, Ed Miller, and Solveig Leithaug
28.	Ps. 84; 127; 139	Ed Miller, Lynda Randle, Gloria Gaither, Jeanne and Bob Johnson, and Charlotte Ritchie
29.	Prov. 3:1—6:35	Jeff Hawes, Gloria Gaither, and Ed Miller
30.	Prov. 24; 29:1—31:31	Connie Hopper, Ed Miller, Gloria Gaither, and Ernie Haase
31.	Is. 6:1–13; 9:1–7; 12:1–6	Gloria Gaither
32.	Is. 40:1—43:21	Gloria Gaither
33.	Is. 49:1–26; 53:1—56:13	Gloria Gaither, Mark Lowry, Reba Rambo-McGuire, and Connie Hopper
34.	Jer. 1:1–19; 29:1—30:24	Gordon Mote, Ivan Parker, and LuLu Roman
35.	Jer. 31:1—33:26	Ed Miller and Roberta Croteau
36.	Dan. 1:1–21; 5:1—6:28	Buddy Mullins
37.	Joel 2:1–32; Mic. 6:1—7:20; Zeph. 3:1–20	Calvin Newton, Kim Hopper, Gloria Gaither, Roberta Croteau, and Solveig Leithaug
38.	Matt. 1:18—2:23	Laura Lee Oldham
39.	Matt. 5:1–16; 6:1—7:12	Bill Gaither, Connie Hopper, Lou Wills Hildreth, Sonya Isaacs Yeary, and Jeff and Sheri Easter
40.	Matt. 16:1—18:35	Bill Gaither and Gary McSpadden
41.	Matt. 26:1—28:20	Laura Lee Oldham and Connie Hopper
42.	Mark 4:1—6:56	Ernie Haase, Sheri Easter, Laura Lee Oldham, and Ed Miller

43.	Mark 8:1—10:52	Ed Miller and Bill Gaither
44.	Luke 1:1—2:52	Ed Miller, Gloria Gaither, Mark Lowry, Susan Jackson, and Lily Isaacs
45.	Luke 11:1—12:59	Joyce Martin Sanders, Gloria Gaither, Charlotte Ritchie, and Bill Gaither
46.	Luke 15:1—17:37	Connie Hopper and Dony McGuire
47.	Luke 23:1—24:53	Laura Lee Oldham, Ernie Haase, Connie Hopper, Gloria Gaither, Ed Miller, and Karen Peck Gooch
48.	John 1:1—3:21	Mark Lowry, Connie Hopper, and Ed Miller
49.	John 10:1—11:57	Laura Lee Oldham
50.	John 12:12—13:20; 14:1—15:27	Laura Lee Oldham, Gloria Gaither, Ed Miller, Rodney Griffin, and Connie Hopper
51.	John 20:1—21:25	Ed Miller and Gloria Gaither
52.	Acts 2:1—4:37; 9:1–43	Ed Miller
53.	Rom. 6:1—8:39	Jeff Allen, Gloria Gaither, Ed Miller, Faye Speer, and Gerald Wolfe
54.	Rom. 12:1–21; 1 Cor. 13:1–13	Gerald Wolfe, Laura Lee Oldham, Connie Hopper, and Bill Gaither
55.	2 Cor. 4:1—5:21; 10:1—12:10	Gloria Gaither, Lisa Daggs, Connie Hopper, Ernie Haase, and Ronnie Booth
56.	Gal. 5:1—6:10; Eph. 2:1–22; 5:1—6:20	Kelly Nelon Clark, Gloria Gaither, and Tanya Goodman Sykes
57.	Phil. 2:1—4:20	Jason Clark, Aaron Wilburn, Dallas Holm, TaRanda Greene, and Joy Gardner
58.	Heb. 4:1–16; 11:1—12:24	Gloria Gaither, Ernie Haase, and David Teems
59.	1 Pet. 1:1—2:25; 4:1—5:11; 1 John 3:1—4:21	Gloria Gaither, Connie Hopper, and Dony McGuire
60.	Rev. 2:1—4:11; 19:1—22:21	Gloria Gaither and Laura Lee Oldham




THE KING IS COMING
BECAUSE HE LIVES