

THE EMMAUS MANUAL:
A LECTIO DIVINA
REFLECTING ON THIS GOOD NEWS

INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of LECTIO DIVINA is a deeper trust in Christ by His Gospel. By this trust we know Him, and with this trust we serve Him.

What is the Gospel?

The Good News

that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.

that Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again,

And that the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit is now offered in His Name.

This Good News is not just information. It is the Light by which He is revealed and the Bread by which He gives Himself to us. And it is made a living and active Word by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Fellowship of believers.

The Gospel comes to us through the words of Scripture, both in the Old Testament promises of a good king, a new heart, and a return home, and in the New Testament announcement that Christ is the fulfillment of all those promises. Scripture itself tells us its job is to create and deepen our faith in Christ: *“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and by believing you may have life in His Name.” JOHN 20:31*

With the LECTIO DIVINA we reflect on those words of Scripture and sit with one small passage at a time, going through it multiple times with different material. This Lectio Divina has a Gospel and Psalm for the Late Morning, a Prophet for Late Afternoon, and an Epistle for the Late Evening. *As you go through the day, you only do one page per genre per day.* (Ex. For Morning, only one page of a Gospel reading, one page of a Psalm)

With this particular LECTIO DIVINA, with each passage there is an order to how you go through:

First time through, with a red pen, we *underline* what stands out to us .

Second time through, with a gold or yellow crayon, we *crayon over* what we’ve underlined and think of what want to take with us or remember for the day.

Third time through, with a marker, we color over what we’ve underlined and crayoned and think of how this passage makes us feel or what kind of mood we’re in. We use either a blue, purple, pink, or green marker and depending on that mood. Blue for longing and patience, purple for sorrow and lament, pink for joy and contentment. The crayoned portion should still be seen, reminding us how God’s word stands even when we’re in a difficult place.

After you’ve gone through it three times, feel free to go back over it with thicker markers and pastels to illuminate each page in a unique way.

LATE MORNING

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THE “I AM” STATEMENTS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

IT IS I

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that

he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.

COME TO ME AND DRINK

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

So he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." So the Jews said, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM

The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?” Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is he.” Others said, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” So they said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was

born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.) Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?” Others said, “These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

I AM IN THE FATHER

At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”

The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” Again they sought to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands.

He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. And many came to him. And they said, “John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.” And many believed in him there.

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in

the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus wept. So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

WHERE I AM, THERE WILL MY SERVANT BE ALSO

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

WHEN I AM LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

I HAVE COME INTO THE WORLD AS LIGHT

And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

I AM THE TRUE VINE

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

*SCENES OF DELIVERANCE
FROM GOSPEL OF MARK*

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’”

John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

JESUS CLEANSSES A LEPER

And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them." But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

JESUS HEALS A PARALYTIC

And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.

And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

JESUS CALLS LEVI

He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

A MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

JESUS CALMS A STORM

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH A DEMON

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

JESUS GIVES INSTRUCTIONS

The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him.

And he did not permit him but said to him, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

JESUS HEALS A WOMAN

And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'"

And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

JESUS HEALS JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER

While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."

And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN'S FAITH

And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And he said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter."

And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

JESUS HEALS A DEAF MAN

Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”

JESUS FEEDS THE FOUR THOUSAND

In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.

And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away." And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these people with bread here in this desolate place?" And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven." And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. And they ate and were satisfied. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA

And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking." Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. And he sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

JESUS HEALS A BOY WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes."

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

JESUS HEALS BLIND BARTIMAEUS

And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

THE WIDOW'S OFFERING

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, “Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor.” And they scolded her. But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

THE CRUCIFIXION

And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.”

And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

HYMNS OF TRUST (PSALMS 30-43)

- 1 I will magnify you, O Lord, for you have lifted me up, *
and have not let my foes triumph over me.
- 2 O Lord my God, I cried unto you, *
and you have made me whole.
- 3 You, Lord, have brought my soul out of the Grave;*
you have saved my life from among those who
go down to the Pit.
- 4 Sing praises unto the Lord, O you saints of his, *
and give thanks unto him for the remembrance
of his holiness.
- 5 For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye,
his pleasure for a lifetime; *
heaviness may endure for a night, but joy
comes in the morning.
- 6 In my prosperity I said, "I shall never be moved; *
you, Lord, of your goodness, have made my hill so strong."
- 7 You turned your face from me, *
and I was distressed.
- 8 Then I cried unto you, O Lord, *
and came to my Lord most humbly.
- 9 What profit is there in my bloodshed, *
if I go down into the Pit?
- 10 Shall the dust give thanks unto you? *
Or shall it declare your faithfulness?
- 11 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me. *
O Lord, be my helper.
- 12 You have turned my lamentation into dancing; *
you have put off my sackcloth and girded me
with gladness.
- 13 Therefore shall my heart sing of your praise without ceasing. *
O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto you for ever.

31

- 1 In you, O Lord, have I put my trust; *
let me never be put to confusion; deliver me in
your righteousness.
- 2 Bow down your ear to me, *
make haste to deliver me,
- 3 And be my strong rock and house of defense, *
that you may save me.
- 4 For you are my strong rock and my castle; *
be also my guide, and lead me for your Name's sake.
- 5 Draw me out of the net that they have laid secretly for me, *
for you are my strength.
- 6 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.
- 7 I have hated those who hold to worthless vanities, *
and my trust has been in the Lord.
- 8 I will be glad and rejoice in your mercy, *
for you have considered my trouble, and have
known my soul in adversities.
- 9 You have not shut me up in the hand of the enemy,*
but have set my feet where they may walk at
liberty.
- 10 Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble;*
my eye is consumed with heaviness, and also
my soul and my body.
- 11 For my life has grown old with heaviness, *
and my years with mourning.
- 12 My strength fails me because of my iniquity, *
and my bones are consumed.
- 13 I have become a reproof among all my enemies, but
especially among my neighbors; *
my acquaintances are afraid of me, and those
who see me in the street shrink from me.
- 14 I am utterly forgotten, as a dead man, out of mind;*
I have become like a broken vessel.

- 15 For I have heard the whispering of the multitude,
and fear is on every side, *
while they conspire together against me and
take their counsel to take away my life.
- 16 But my hope has been in you, O Lord; *
I have said, "You are my God."
- 17 My time is in your hand; *
deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and
from those who persecute me.
- 18 Show your servant the light of your countenance, *
and save me for your mercy's sake.
- 19 Let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon you; *
let the ungodly be put to confusion, and be put
to silence in the grave.
- 20 Let the lying lips be put to silence, *
which cruelly, disdainfully, and spitefully
speak against the righteous.
- 21 Oh, how plentiful is your goodness, which you
have laid up for those who fear you, *
and which you have prepared for those who
put their trust in you, even before the children of men!
- 22 You hide them in the secret place of your presence
from those who conspire against them; *
you keep them in your refuge from the strife of tongues.
- 23 Thanks be to the Lord, *
for he has shown me marvellously great kindness in a strong city.
- 24 But when I was afraid, I said in my haste, *
"I am cast out of the sight of your eyes."
- 25 Nevertheless, you heard the voice of my prayer *
when I cried unto you.
- 26 O love the Lord, all you his saints, *
for the Lord preserves those who are faithful,
and plenteously repays the proud.
- 27 Be strong, and he shall establish your heart, *
all you that put your trust in the Lord.

- 1 Blessed is the one whose unrighteousness is forgiven, *
and whose sin is covered.
- 2 Blessed is the one to whom the Lord imputes no sin, *
and in whose spirit there is no guile.
- 3 For while I held my tongue, my bones wasted away; *
I ceased not from groaning all the day long.
- 4 For your hand was heavy upon me day and night, *
and I was dried up and withered, as in the
drought of summer.
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin unto you, *
and I did not hide my iniquity.
- 6 I said, "I will confess my sins unto the Lord"; *
and so you forgave the wickedness of my sin.
- 7 For this reason shall all the godly make their prayers
unto you at a time when you may be found; *
when the great floodwaters rise, they shall not
reach them.
- 8 You are my hiding-place; you shall preserve me from trouble; *
you shall encompass me with songs of deliverance.
- 9 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that
you should go, *
and I will guide you with my eye.
- 10 Do not be like the horse and mule, which have no understanding, *
whose mouths must be held with bit and
bridle, or else they will not come near you."
- 11 Great troubles remain for the ungodly; *
but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.
- 12 Be glad, O you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; *
and be joyful, all who are true of heart.

33

- 1 Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; *
it is fitting for the just to be thankful.
- 2 Praise the Lord with the harp; *
sing praises unto him with the ten-stringed
lute.
- 3 Sing unto him a new song; *
make skillful melody and cry aloud with joy.
- 4 For the word of the Lord is true, *
and all his works are faithful.
- 5 He loves righteousness and true judgment; *
the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.
- 6 By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, *
and all the hosts of them by the breath of his
mouth.
- 7 He gathers the waters of the sea together, as in a
heap, *
and lays up the deep, as in a treasure house.
- 8 Let all the earth fear the Lord; *
stand in awe of him, all you that dwell in the
world.
- 9 For he spoke, and it was done; *
he commanded and it stood fast.
- 10 The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to
naught; *
he makes the devices of the peoples to be of no
effect, and casts out the counsels of princes.
- 11 The counsel of the Lord shall endure for ever, *
and the thoughts of his heart from generation
to generation.
- 12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, *

and blessed are the people he has chosen for
himself to be his inheritance.

13 The Lord looks down from heaven and beholds all
the children of men; *

from the habitation of his dwelling he
considers all those who dwell on the earth.

14 He fashions all the hearts of them *

and understands all their works.

15 There is no king who can be saved by a mighty host; *
neither is any mighty man delivered by great
strength.

16 A horse is considered a vain hope to save a man; *
neither shall it deliver anyone by its great
strength.

17 Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear
him, *

and upon those who put their trust in his
mercy,

18 To deliver their soul from death, *

and to feed them in the time of famine.

19 Our soul has patiently waited for the Lord, *
for he is our help and our shield.

20 Our heart shall rejoice in him, *

because we have hoped in his holy Name.

21 Let your merciful kindness, O Lord, be upon us, *
as we have put our trust in you.

- 1 I will always give thanks unto the Lord; *
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
- 2 My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; *
the humble shall hear this and be glad.
- 3 O praise the Lord with me, *
and let us magnify his Name together.
- 4 I sought the Lord, and he heard me; *
he delivered me out of all my fears.
- 5 They looked unto him, and were made glad, *
and their faces were not ashamed.
- 6 Look, the poor man cries, and the Lord hears him, *
and saves him out of all his troubles.
- 7 The angel of the Lord camps round about those
who fear him, *
and delivers them in time of need.
- 8 O taste and see how gracious the Lord is; *
blessed is the one who trusts in him.
- 9 O fear the Lord, you that are his saints; *
for those who fear him lack nothing.
- 10 The lions lack and suffer hunger, *
but those who seek the Lord shall lack nothing
that is good.
- 11 Come, children, and listen to me; *
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
- 12 Who among you desires to live, *
and longs to see good days?
- 13 Keep your tongue from evil, *
and your lips from speaking lies.
- 14 Turn from evil and do good; *

seek peace and pursue it.

- 15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, *
and his ears are open to their prayers.
- 16 The countenance of the Lord is against those who
do evil, *
to root out the remembrance of them from the
earth.
- 17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them *
and delivers them out of all their troubles.
- 18 The Lord is near to those who are brokenhearted *
and will save those who are crushed in spirit.
- 19 Great are the troubles of the righteous, *
but the Lord delivers him out of them all.
- 20 He keeps all his bones, *
so that not one of them is broken.
- 21 But evil shall slay the ungodly, *
and those who hate the righteous shall be
desolate.
- 22 The Lord delivers the souls of his servants, *
and all those who put their trust in him shall
not be destitute.

- 1 Contend, O Lord, with those who contend with me, *
and fight against those who fight against me.
- 2 Take up the shield and buckler, *
and stand up to help me.
- 3 Bring forth the spear and bar the way against those
who pursue me; *
say to my soul, "I am your salvation."
- 4 Let them be confounded and put to shame who
seek after my life; *
let them be turned back and brought to
confusion who imagine evil against me.
- 5 Let them be as the chaff before the wind, *
and let the angel of the Lord scatter them.
- 6 Let their way be dark and slippery, *
and let the angel of the Lord pursue them.
- 7 For they have secretly laid their net to destroy me
without a cause; *
indeed, without a cause have they made a pit to
take away my life.
- 8 Let sudden destruction come upon them unawares, and the net, which
they have laid secretly, catch themselves, *
that they may fall into their own trouble.
- 9 Then shall my soul be joyful in the Lord; *
I shall rejoice in his salvation.
- 10 All my bones shall say, "Lord, who is like you? You
deliver the poor from those who are too strong for
them; *
indeed, the poor and those who are in misery

- from those who rob them.”
- 11 Malicious witnesses rise up; *
they charge me with matters I know nothing about.
- 12 They repay me evil for good, *
to the great sorrow of my soul.
- 13 Nevertheless, when they were sick, I put on
sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting; *
I prayed with my whole heart, as if it had been
my friend or my brother.
- 14 I behaved myself as one who mourns for his mother; *
I was bowed down with heaviness of heart.
- 15 But in my adversity, they rejoiced and gathered
themselves together; *
indeed, those who struck me came together
against me, and I had no rest; they tore at me,
and would not cease.
- 16 When I stumbled they mocked me exceedingly, *
and gnashed at me with their teeth.
- 17 Lord, how long will you look on this? *
O deliver me from the calamities they bring
upon me, and my life from the lions.
- 18 So will I give you thanks in the great congregation; *
I will praise you among many people.
- 19 O let not those who are my enemies triumph over
me deceitfully; *
neither let them wink with their eyes, those
who hate me without a cause.
- 20 For their talking is not for peace, *
but they imagine deceitful words against those
who are quiet in the land.
- 21 They open their mouths at me, and say, *

- “Aha! Aha! We saw it with our own eyes!”
- 22 This you have seen, O Lord. *
 Hold not your tongue then; be not far from
 me, O Lord.
- 23 Awake, and stand up to judge my case; *
 avenge my cause, my God and my Lord.
- 24 Judge me, O Lord my God, according to your
righteousness, *
 and let them not triumph over me.
- 25 Let them not say in their hearts, “Aha! We have
what we want!” *
 Neither let them say, “We have devoured him.”
- 26 Let them be put to confusion and shame who
rejoice at my trouble; *
 let them be clothed with shame and dishonor
 who boast against me.
- 27 Let them be glad and rejoice who favor my
righteous cause; *
 indeed, let them say always, “Great is the Lord,
 who takes pleasure in the prosperity of his
 servant.”
- 28 And as for my tongue, it shall be talking of your
righteousness *
 and of your praise all the day long.

36

- 1 My heart shows me the wickedness of the ungodly;*
there is no fear of God before his eyes.
- 2 For he flatters himself in his own sight, *
until his abominable sin is found out.
- 3 The words of his mouth are unrighteous and full of deceit; *
he has left off behaving wisely and doing good.
- 4 He imagines mischief upon his bed, and has set
himself in no good way; *
neither does he abhor anything that is evil.
- 5 Your mercy, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, *
and your faithfulness to the clouds.
- 6 Your righteousness stands like the strong
mountains; your judgments are like the great deep;*
you, Lord, shall save both man and beast.
- 7 How excellent is your mercy, O God! *
The children of men shall take refuge under
the shadow of your wings.
- 8 They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of
your house, *
and you shall give them drink from your
pleasures as out of a river.
- 9 For with you is the well of life, *
and in your light shall we see light.
- 10 O continue your loving-kindness to those who know you, *
and your righteousness to those who are true of heart.
- 11 O let not the foot of the proud come against me, *
and let not the hand of the ungodly cast me down.
- 12 There have they fallen, all those who work
wickedness; *
they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

37

- 1 Fret not yourself because of the ungodly, *
neither be envious of those who are evildoers.
- 2 For they shall soon be dried up like the grass, *
and be withered even as the green herb.
- 3 Put your trust in the Lord, and do good; *
dwell in the land, and surely you shall be fed.
- 4 Delight yourself in the Lord, *
and he shall give you your heart's desire.
- 5 Commit your way unto the Lord and put your
trust in him, *
and he shall bring it to pass.
- 6 He shall make your righteousness as clear as the light *
and your just dealing as the noonday.
- 7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; *
do not grieve yourself over the one whose way
prosper, over the one who carries out evil
counsels.
- 8 Refrain from wrath, and let go of anger; *
fret not yourself, lest you be moved to do evil.
- 9 For evildoers shall be rooted out, *
but those who wait patiently for the Lord, they
shall inherit the land.
- 10 Yet a little while, and the ungodly shall be clean gone; *
you shall look for their place, and they shall not
be there.
- 11 But the meek-spirited shall possess the land *
and shall be refreshed with an abundance of peace.
- 12 The ungodly plot against the just *
and gnash at them with their teeth.
- 13 The Lord shall laugh at them in scorn, *
for he sees that their day is coming.

- 14 The ungodly have drawn out the sword and have
bent their bow *
to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay
those who walk aright.
- 15 Their sword shall go through their own heart, *
and their bow shall be broken.
- 16 The little that the righteous has *
is better than great riches of the ungodly.
- 17 For the arms of the ungodly shall be broken, *
but the Lord upholds the righteous.
- 18 The Lord knows the days of the godly, *
and their inheritance shall endure for ever.
- 19 They shall not be confounded in perilous times, *
and in the days of famine they shall have enough.
- 20 As for the ungodly, they shall perish, and the
enemies of the Lord shall be consumed as in a fiery furnace; *
even as smoke shall they vanish away.
- 21 The ungodly borrow and do not repay, *
but the righteous are merciful and generous.
- 22 Those who are blessed by God shall possess the land, *
but those who are cursed by him shall be rooted out.
- 23 The Lord orders a man's steps; *
he makes his footsteps sure and preserves him on his path.
- 24 Though he fall, he shall not be cast down, *
for the Lord upholds him with his hand.
- 25 I have been young, and now I am old, *
yet I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his
children begging bread.
- 26 The righteous is ever merciful in lending, *
and his seed shall be blessed.
- 27 Flee from evil, and do that which is good, *
and dwell in the land for ever.

- 28 For the Lord loves that which is right; *
he forsakes not those who are godly, and they
are preserved for ever.
- 29 The unrighteous shall be punished; *
as for the seed of the ungodly, it shall be rooted out.
- 30 The righteous shall inherit the land *
and dwell therein for ever.
- 31 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, *
and his tongue talks of judgment.
- 32 The law of his God is in his heart, *
and his footsteps shall not falter.
- 33 The ungodly lie in wait for the righteous *
and seek occasion to slay him.
- 34 The Lord will not leave him in their hand, *
nor allow him to be condemned when he is judged.
- 35 Hope in the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall
exalt you so that you shall possess the land; *
when the ungodly perish, you shall see it.
- 36 I myself have seen the ungodly in great power, *
and flourishing like a tree in full leaf.
- 37 I went by, and behold, they were gone; *
I sought them, but their place could nowhere be found.
- 38 Mark the blameless, and take heed of the upright, *
for there is a future for the peaceable.
- 39 As for the transgressors, they shall perish together, *
and the end of the ungodly is that they shall be
rooted out at the last.
- 40 But the salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord, *
who is also their strength in the time of trouble.
- 41 And the Lord shall stand by them and save them; *
he shall deliver them from the ungodly and
shall save them, because they put their trust in him.

- 1 Rebuke me not, O Lord, in your anger, *
neither chasten me in your weighty displeasure.
- 2 For your arrows stick fast in me, *
and your hand presses me hard.
- 3 There is no health in my flesh, because of your displeasure; *
neither is there any rest in my bones, by reason
of my sin.
- 4 For my iniquities have gone over my head *
and are like a heavy burden, too much for me
to bear.
- 5 My wounds stink and fester, *
by reason of my foolishness.
- 6 I am brought into such great trouble and misery *
that I go about mourning all the day long.
- 7 For my loins are filled with burning, *
and there is no wholeness in my body.
- 8 I am feeble and sorely smitten; *
I have roared because of the tumult of my heart.
- 9 Lord, you know all my desire, *
and my groaning is not hidden from you.
- 10 My heart is panting, my strength has failed me, *
and the sight of my eyes is gone from me.
- 11 My friends and my neighbors turn away from my
trouble, *
and my kinsmen stand afar off.
- 12 Those also who seek after my life lay snares for me, *
and those who go about to do me evil talk of
wickedness and
imagine deceit all the day long.

- 13 As for me, I am like the deaf who do not hear, *
and as one who is mute, who does not open his
mouth.
- 14 I have become like a man who hears not, *
and in whose mouth are no reproofs.
- 15 For in you, O Lord, have I put my trust; *
you shall answer for me, O Lord my God.
- 16 I have said, "Let not my enemies triumph over me,"
for when my foot slipped, they rejoiced greatly
over me.
- 17 Truly, I am about to fall, *
and my pain is ever with me.
- 18 For I will confess my wickedness, *
and be sorry for my sin.
- 19 But my enemies live, and are mighty, *
and those who hate me wrongfully are many in
number.
- 20 Those also who repay evil for good are against me, *
because I follow that which is good.
- 21 Forsake me not, O Lord my God; *
O be not far from me.
- 22 Make haste to help me, *
O Lord God of my salvation.

39

- 1 I said, "I will take heed to my ways, *
that I may not offend with my tongue.
- 2 I will keep my mouth as with a bridle *
while the ungodly are in my sight."
- 3 I held my tongue and spoke nothing; *
I kept silence, even from good words; but it was
pain and grief to me.
- 4 My heart was hot within me, and while I was thus pondering the fire kindled, *
and at the last I spoke with my tongue:
- 5 "Lord, let me know my end and the number of my days, *
that I may learn how short my life is.
- 6 Behold, you have made my days as a span in length, *
and my age is even as nothing before you; and
truly, everyone living is but a breath.
- 7 For everyone walks about as a shadow, and disquiets
himself in vain; *
he heaps up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them.
- 8 And now, Lord, what is my hope? *
Truly, my hope is in you.
- 9 Deliver me from all my offenses, *
and make me not a taunt of the foolish.
- 10 I became mute and opened not my mouth, *
for it was you that brought it to pass.
- 11 Take your affliction from me; *
I am consumed by the blows of your heavy hand.
- 12 When you, with rebukes, chasten someone for sin, you consume what
is dear to him, like a moth eating a garment; *
everyone therefore is but vanity.
- 13 Hear my prayer, O Lord, and with your ears consider my cry; *
hold not your peace at my tears.
- 14 For I am a stranger with you, *
and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.
- 15 O turn your gaze from me, that I may again be glad, *
before I go away to be seen no more."

- 1 I waited patiently for the Lord, *
and he inclined to me, and heard my call.
- 2 He brought me out of the horrible pit, out of the
mire and clay; *
he set my feet upon the rock, and secured my footing.
- 3 He has put a new song in my mouth, *
a song of thanksgiving unto our God.
- 4 Many shall see and fear, *
and shall put their trust in the Lord.
- 5 Blessed is the man who has set his hope in the Lord,*
and has not turned to the proud, or to those
who go about lying.
- 6 O Lord my God, great are the wondrous works
which you have done, and also your thoughts
toward us; *
there is none who can be compared with you.
- 7 If I should declare them and speak of them, *
they would be more than I am able to express.
- 8 Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, *
but my ears you have opened.
- 9 Burnt offerings and sin offerings you have not required, *
and so I said, "Behold, I come;
- 10 In the volume of the book it is written of me, that I
delight to do your will, O my God; *
indeed, your law is within my heart."
- 11 I have declared your righteousness in the great congregation; *
behold, I will not restrain my lips, O Lord, and
that you know.
- 12 I have not hidden your righteousness within my heart; *

my talk has been of your truth and of your
salvation.

- 13 I have not concealed your loving mercy and truth *
from the great congregation.
- 14 Withdraw not your mercy from me, O Lord; *
let your loving-kindness and your truth always
preserve me.
- 15 For innumerable troubles have encompassed me;
my sins have taken such hold of me that I am not
able to look up; *
indeed, they are more in number than the hairs
of my head, and my heart has utterly failed me.
- 16 O Lord, let it be your pleasure to deliver me; *
make haste, O Lord, to help me.
- 17 Let them be ashamed and confounded who seek
after my soul to destroy it; *
let them be driven backward and rebuked who
wish me evil.
- 18 Let them be desolate and rewarded with shame *
who say to me, "Aha, Aha."
- 19 Let all those who seek you be joyful and glad in you; *
and let those who love your salvation say
always, "The Lord be praised."
- 20 As for me, I am poor and needy, *
but the Lord cares for me.
- 21 You are my helper and deliverer; *
do not tarry, O my God.

41

- 1 Blessed is the one who considers the poor and needy; *
the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble.
- 2 The Lord preserves him and keeps him alive, that
he may be blessed upon earth, *
and delivers him not over to the will of his enemies.
- 3 The Lord comforts him when he lies sick upon his bed, *
and restores him from his bed of sickness.
- 4 I said, "Lord, be merciful to me; *
heal my soul, for I have sinned against you."
- 5 My enemies speak evil of me: *
"When shall he die, and his name perish?"
- 6 And if anyone comes to see me, he speaks empty words; *
his heart conceives falsehood within him, and
when he goes forth, he tells it.
- 7 All my enemies whisper together against me; *
even against me are they devising evil:
- 8 "A deadly thing has taken hold of him, *
and now that he lies down, he will rise up no more."
- 9 Indeed, even my own familiar friend, whom I
trusted, who also ate of my bread, *
has lifted up his heel against me.
- 10 But be merciful to me, O Lord; *
raise me up again, and I shall repay them.
- 11 By this I know you favor me, *
that my enemy does not triumph over me.
- 12 And when I am in health, you uphold me, *
and shall set me before your face for ever.
- 13 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, *
world without end. Amen.

42

- 1 As the deer desires the water brooks, *
so longs my soul for you, O God.
- 2 My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God;*
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?
- 3 My tears have been my food day and night, *
while all day long they say to me, "Where now is your God?"
- 4 When I think upon these things, I pour out my heart, *
when I remember how I went with the multitude, and brought
them into the house of God,
- 5 With the voice of praise and thanksgiving *
among those who keep holy day.
- 6 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul, *
and why are you so disquieted within me?
- 7 O put your trust in God, *
for I will yet give him thanks, who is the help of
my countenance, and my God.
- 8 My soul is heavy within me; *
therefore I will remember you from the land of
Jordan, and from Mizar among the hills of Hermon.
- 9 One deep calls to another in the noise of your waterfalls; *
all your waves and storms have gone over me.
- 10 The Lord will grant his loving-kindness in the daytime; *
and in the night season will I sing of him, and
make my prayer to the God of my life.
- 11 I will say to God my rock, "Why have you forgotten me? *
Why am I full of heaviness, while the enemy oppresses me?"
- 12 My bones are broken asunder, *
while my enemies mock me to my face,
- 13 While all day long they say to me, *
"Where now is your God?"
- 14 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul, *
and why are you so disquieted within me?
- 15 O put your trust in God, *
for I will yet give him thanks, who is the help of
my countenance, and my God.

43

- 1 Give judgment for me, O God, and defend my
cause against the ungodly people; *
 O deliver me from the deceitful and the wicked.
- 2 For you are the God of my strength; why have you
put me far from you? *
 And why do I go about with heaviness, while
 the enemy oppresses me?
- 3 O send out your light and your truth, that they may
lead me, *
 and bring me to your holy hill, and to your dwelling;
- 4 That I may go to the altar of God, even to the God
of my joy and gladness; *
 and on the harp will I give thanks to you, O
 God, my God.
- 5 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul, *
 and why are you so disquieted within me?
- 6 O put your trust in God, *
 for I will yet give him thanks, who is the help of
 my countenance, and my God.

BOOK FOUR OF THE PSALMS (90-106)

90

- 1 Lord, you have been our refuge *
from one generation to another.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or the
earth and the world were made, *
you are God from everlasting, and world without end.
- 3 You turn man back to the dust; *
you say, "Return, O children of men."
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight are as yesterday, *
even as a day that is past.
- 5 You scatter them as a night-watch that comes quickly to an end; *
they are even as a dream and fade away.
- 6 They are like the grass, which in the morning is green, *
but in the evening is dried up and withered.
- 7 For we consume away in your displeasure *
and are afraid at your wrathful indignation.
- 8 You have set our misdeeds before you, *
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
- 9 For when you are angry, all our days are gone; *
we bring our years to an end, as a tale that is told.
- 10 The days of our life are seventy years, and though
some be so strong that they come to eighty years, *
yet is their span but labor and sorrow; so soon
it passes away, and we are gone.
- 11 But who regards the power of your wrath, *
and who considers the fierceness of your anger?
- 12 So teach us to number our days, *
that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
- 13 Turn again, O Lord, and tarry not; *
be gracious unto your servants.
- 14 O satisfy us with your mercy in the morning; *

- so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.
- 15 Comfort us again, according to the measure of the
days that you have afflicted us, *
and for the years in which we have suffered adversity.
- 16 Show your servants your work *
and their children your glory.
- 17 And may the grace of the Lord our God be upon us; *
prosper the work of our hands; O prosper our
handiwork.

91

- 1 Whoever dwells under the defense of the Most High *
 shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say unto the Lord, “You are my refuge and my stronghold, *
 my God in whom I will trust.”
- 3 For he shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter *
 and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He shall defend you under his wings, and you shall be safe under his feathers; *
 his faithfulness and truth shall be your shield and buckler.
- 5 You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, *
 nor of the arrow that flies by day,
- 6 Of the pestilence that walks in darkness, *
 nor of the sickness that destroys at noonday.
- 7 A thousand shall fall beside you, and ten thousand at your right hand, *
 but it shall not come near you.
- 8 Indeed, with your eyes you shall behold *
 and see the reward of the ungodly.
- 9 Because you have said, “The Lord is my refuge,” *
 and have made the Most High your stronghold,
- 10 There shall no evil happen to you, *
 neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.
- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over you, *
 to keep you in all your ways.
- 12 They shall bear you in their hands, *
 that you hurt not your foot against a stone.
- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder; *
 the young lion and the serpent you shall trample under your feet.
- 14 “Because he has set his love upon me, therefore I will deliver him; *
 I will lift him up, because he has known my Name.
- 15 He shall call upon me, and I will hear him; *
 indeed, I am with him in trouble; I will deliver him and bring
 him honor.
- 16 With long life I will satisfy him, *
 and show him my salvation.”

92

- 1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, *
and to sing praises unto your Name, O Most High,
- 2 To tell of your loving-kindness early in the morning, *
and of your faithfulness in the night season,
- 3 Upon an instrument of ten strings and upon the lute, *
with the sound of melody upon the harp.
- 4 For you, Lord, have made me glad by your deeds, *
and I will shout for joy because of your handiwork.
- 5 O Lord, how glorious are your works; *
your thoughts are very deep.
- 6 The dull of heart does not consider this, *
and a fool does not understand it:
- 7 Though the ungodly are as green as the grass, and
though all the workers of wickedness flourish, *
they shall be destroyed for ever; but you, Lord,
are the Most High for evermore.
- 8 For lo, your enemies, O Lord, lo, your enemies shall perish, *
and all the workers of wickedness shall be destroyed.
- 9 But my horn shall be exalted like the horns of wild bulls; *
for I am anointed with fresh oil.
- 10 My eye also shall see its desire upon my enemies, *
and my ear shall hear with joy the end of the
wicked who rise up against me.
- 11 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, *
and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Lebanon.
- 12 Those who are planted in the house of the Lord *
shall flourish in the courts of our God.
- 13 They also shall bring forth fruit in their old age, *
and shall be green and full of sap,
- 14 That they may show how upright the Lord is, *
my rock, in whom there is no unrighteousness.

93

- 1 The Lord is King and has put on glorious apparel; *
the Lord has put on his apparel and girded
himself with strength.
- 2 He has made the round world so sure *
that it cannot be moved.
- 3 Ever since the world began, your throne has been established; *
you are from everlasting.
- 4 The floods have risen, O Lord; the floods have lifted
up their voice; *
the floods have lifted up their waves.
- 5 Mightier than the sound of many waters, mightier
than the waves of the sea, *
the Lord who dwells on high is mightier.
- 6 Your testimonies, O Lord, are very sure; *
holiness adorns your house for ever.

94

- 1 O Lord God to whom vengeance belongs, *
O God to whom vengeance belongs, show yourself.
- 2 Arise, O Judge of the world, *
and reward the proud according to their deserving.
- 3 O Lord, how long shall the ungodly, *
how long shall the ungodly triumph?
- 4 How long shall all evildoers speak so disdainfully *
and make such proud boasting?
- 5 They smite down your people, O Lord, *
and trouble your heritage.
- 6 They murder the widow and the stranger, *
and put the fatherless to death.
- 7 And yet they say, "The Lord shall not see, *
neither shall the God of Jacob regard it."
- 8 Take heed, you unwise among the people; *
O you fools, when will you understand?
- 9 He who planted the ear, shall he not hear? *
Or he who made the eye, shall he not see?
- 10 Or he who nurtures the nations, *
he who teaches humanity knowledge, shall he
not punish?
- 11 The Lord knows the thoughts of man, *
that they are but vain.
- 12 Blessed is the one whom you chasten, O Lord, *
and whom you teach your law,
- 13 That you may give him patience in time of adversity, *
until a pit is dug for the ungodly.
- 14 For the Lord will not fail his people, *
neither will he forsake his inheritance,

- 15 But righteousness shall return to the place of judgment, *
and all those who are true of heart shall follow it.
- 16 Who will rise up with me against the wicked, *
or who will take my part against the evildoers?
- 17 If the Lord had not helped me, *
my soul would soon have dwelt in the land of silence.
- 18 But when I said, "My foot has slipped," *
your mercy, O Lord, held me up.
- 19 In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, *
your comforts refreshed my soul.
- 20 Will you have anything to do with the council of
wickedness, *
which turns evil into law?
- 21 They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous *
and condemn the innocent to death.
- 22 But the Lord is my refuge, *
and my God is the rock of my confidence.
- 23 He shall recompense them for their wickedness,
and destroy them in their own malice; *
indeed, the Lord our God shall destroy them.

95

- 1 O come, let us sing unto the Lord; *
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *
and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
- 3 For the Lord is a great God *
and a great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are all the depths of the earth, *
and the heights of the hills are his also.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it, *
and his hands prepared the dry land.
- 6 O come, let us worship and fall down, *
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
- 7 For he is our God, *
and we are the people of his pasture, and the
sheep of his hand.
- 8 Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts *
as in the provocation, and as in the day of
temptation in the wilderness,
- 9 When your fathers tested me, *
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my works.
- 10 Forty years long was I grieved with this generation and said, *
“It is a people that err in their hearts, for they
have not known my ways,”
- 11 Of whom I swore in my wrath *
that they should not enter into my rest.

96

- 1 O sing unto the Lord a new song; *
sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth.
- 2 Sing unto the Lord and praise his Name; *
tell of his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his honor to the nations, *
and his wonders to all peoples.
- 4 For the Lord is great, and highly to be praised; *
he is more to be feared than all gods.
- 5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; *
but it is the Lord who made the heavens.
- 6 Glory and majesty are before him; *
power and honor are in his sanctuary.
- 7 Ascribe unto the Lord, O you families of the peoples, *
ascribe unto the Lord worship and power.
- 8 Ascribe unto the Lord the honor due unto his Name; *
bring offerings and come into his courts.
- 9 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; *
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
- 10 Tell it out among the nations, “The Lord is King; *
it is he who has made the world so firm that it
cannot be moved; he shall judge the peoples righteously.”
- 11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; *
let the sea make a noise, and all that is therein.
- 12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it; *
then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.
- 13 For he comes, for he comes to judge the earth, *
and with righteousness to judge the world, and
the peoples with his truth.

97

- 1 The Lord is King; let the earth be glad. *
Indeed, let the multitude of the isles be glad.
- 2 Clouds and darkness are round about him; *
righteousness and judgment are the foundation
of his throne.
- 3 There goes a fire before him *
and burns up his enemies on every side.
- 4 His lightnings gave light to the world; *
the earth saw it and was afraid.
- 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, *
at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
- 6 The heavens have declared his righteousness, *
and all the people have seen his glory.
- 7 Confounded be all those who worship carved
images, and who delight in false gods; *
worship him, all you gods.
- 8 Zion heard of it and rejoiced, *
and the daughters of Judah were glad, because
of your judgments, O Lord.
- 9 For you, Lord, are most high over all the earth; *
you are exalted far above all gods.
- 10 O you who love the Lord, see that you hate the
thing which is evil; *
the Lord preserves the souls of his saints; he
shall deliver them from the hand of the ungodly.
- 11 A light has sprung up for the righteous, *
and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.
- 12 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, *
and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

98

- 1 O sing unto the Lord a new song, *
for he has done marvelous things.
- 2 With his own right hand and with his holy arm, *
he has won for himself the victory.
- 3 The Lord declared his salvation; *
his righteousness has he openly shown in the
sight of the nations.
- 4 He has remembered his mercy and truth toward the
house of Israel, *
and all the ends of the world have seen the
salvation of our God.
- 5 Show yourselves joyful in the Lord, all you lands; *
sing, rejoice, and give thanks.
- 6 Praise the Lord with the harp; *
sing with the harp a psalm of thanksgiving.
- 7 With trumpets also and horns, *
O show yourselves joyful before the Lord, the King.
- 8 Let the sea make a noise, and all that is in it, *
the round world, and those who dwell therein.
- 9 Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills be
joyful together before the Lord, *
for he has come to judge the earth.
- 10 With righteousness shall he judge the world, *
and the peoples with equity.

99

- 1 The Lord is King; let the peoples tremble; *
 he sits between the cherubim; let the earth shake.
- 2 The Lord is great in Zion *
 and high above all peoples.
- 3 They shall give thanks unto his Name, which is
 great and wonderful; *
 holy is he and mighty, a King who loves justice.
- 4 You have established equity; *
 you have executed judgment and righteousness in Jacob.
- 5 O magnify the Lord our God, *
 and fall down before his footstool, for he is holy.
- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel
 among those who call upon his Name, *
 they called upon the Lord, and he heard them.
- 7 He spoke to them out of the cloudy pillar, *
 for they kept his testimonies and the law that he gave them.
- 8 You heard them, O Lord our God; *
 you forgave them, O God, yet punished their evildoings.
- 9 O magnify the Lord our God, and worship him upon his holy hill, *
 for the Lord our God is holy.

100

- 1 O be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; *
serve the Lord with gladness, and come before
his presence with a song.
- 2 Be assured that the Lord, he is God; *
it is he that has made us, and not we ourselves;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
- 3 O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and
into his courts with praise; *
be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.
- 4 For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting, *
and his truth endures from generation to
generation.

- 1 My song shall be of mercy and judgment; *
unto you, O Lord, will I sing.
- 2 O let me have understanding *
in the way of godliness.
- 3 When will you come to me? *
I will walk in my house with integrity of heart.
- 4 I will set no wicked thing before my eyes; *
I hate the sins of unfaithfulness; no such thing
shall cleave to me.
- 5 A crooked heart shall depart from me; *
I will not know a wicked person.
- 6 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, *
him will I destroy.
- 7 Whoever has a proud look and an arrogant heart, *
I will not suffer him.
- 8 My eyes shall look with favor upon the faithful in the land, *
that they may dwell with me.
- 9 Whoever leads a godly life, *
he shall be my servant.
- 10 No deceitful person shall dwell in my house; *
the one who tells lies shall not tarry in my sight.
- 11 I shall soon destroy all the ungodly who are in the land, *
that I may root out all evildoers from the city
of the Lord.

- 1 Hear my prayer, O Lord, *
and let my cry come unto you.
- 2 Hide not your face from me in the time of my trouble; *
incline your ear to me when I call; O hear me, and very soon.
- 3 For my days are consumed like smoke, *
and my bones are burnt up as in a furnace.
- 4 My heart is smitten and withered like grass, *
so that I forget to eat my bread.
- 5 Because of the voice of my groaning, *
my bones will scarcely cleave to my flesh.
- 6 I have become like an owl in the wilderness *
and like a screech-owl among the ruins.
- 7 I am solitary, and lie sleepless because of my groaning; *
I am like a sparrow that sits alone upon the housetop.
- 8 My enemies revile me all day long, *
and those who are enraged against me conspire to do me hurt.
- 9 For I have eaten ashes as if they were bread *
and mingled my drink with weeping,
- 10 Because of your indignation and wrath, *
for you have taken me up and cast me down.
- 11 My days are gone like a shadow, *
and I am withered like grass.
- 12 But you, O Lord, shall endure for ever, *
and your remembrance throughout all generations.
- 13 You shall arise and have mercy upon Zion, *
for it is time for you to have mercy upon her;
indeed, the time has come.
- 14 For your servants love her very stones, *
and are moved to pity to see her in the dust.

15 The nations shall fear your Name, O Lord, *
and all the kings of the earth your majesty,
16 When the Lord shall build up Zion, *
and when his glory shall appear,
17 When he turns to the prayer of the destitute *
and despises not their plea.
18 This shall be written for those that come after, *
and a people that shall yet be born shall praise the Lord.
19 For he has looked down from his sanctuary; *
from the heavens the Lord has beheld the earth,
20 That he might hear the groanings of those who are in captivity,*
and deliver those who are condemned to die,
21 That they may declare the Name of the Lord in Zion, *
and his praises in Jerusalem;
22 When the peoples are gathered together, *
and the kingdoms also, to serve the Lord.
23 He brought down my strength before my time, *
and shortened my days.
24 But I said, “O my God, take me not away in the
midst of my days; *
for your years endure throughout all generations.”
25 You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of
the earth, *
and the heavens are the work of your hands.
26 They shall perish, but you shall endure; *
they all shall wear out, as does a garment;
27 And as a garment you shall change them, and they
shall be changed; *
but you are the same, and your years shall not fail.
28 The children of your servants shall continue, *
and their seed shall stand fast in your sight.

- 1 Praise the Lord, O my soul, *
and all that is within me, praise his holy Name.
- 2 Praise the Lord, O my soul, *
and forget not all his benefits:
- 3 Who forgives all your sin *
and heals all your infirmities,
- 4 Who saves your life from the pit *
and crowns you with mercy and
loving-kindness,
- 5 Who satisfies you with good things, *
renewing your youth like an eagle's.
- 6 The Lord executes righteousness and judgment *
for all those who are oppressed with wrong.
- 7 He showed his ways to Moses, *
his works to the children of Israel.
- 8 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, *
long-suffering and of great goodness.
- 9 He will not always chide us, *
neither will he keep his anger for ever.
- 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, *
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, *
so great is his mercy also toward those who fear him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west, *
so far has he set our sins from us.
- 13 As a father pities his own children, *
so is the Lord merciful to those who fear him.
- 14 For he knows whereof we are made; *
he remembers that we are but dust.

- 15 The days of man are as grass; *
 he flourishes as a flower of the field.
- 16 For as soon as the wind goes over it, it is gone, *
 and its place shall know it no more.
- 17 But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures for
ever and ever upon those who fear him, *
 and his righteousness upon children's children,
- 18 Even upon those who keep his covenant *
 and think upon his commandments to do them.
- 19 The Lord has prepared his throne in heaven, *
 and his kingdom rules over all.
- 20 O praise the Lord, you angels of his, you that excel in strength, *
 you that fulfill his commandment, and hearken
 unto the voice of his words.
- 21 O praise the Lord, all you his hosts, *
 you servants of his that do his pleasure.
- 22 O speak good of the Lord, all you works of his, in
all places of his dominion; *
 praise the Lord, O my soul.

- 1 Praise the Lord, O my soul. *
O Lord my God, you have become exceedingly
glorious; you are clothed with majesty and honor.
- 2 You clothe yourself with light as with a garment, *
and spread out the heavens like a curtain.
- 3 You lay the beams of your chambers in the waters, *
and make the clouds your chariot, and walk
upon the wings of the wind.
- 4 You make winds your messengers, *
and flames of fire your ministers.
- 5 You laid the foundations of the earth, *
that it never should move at any time.
- 6 You cover it with the deep as with a garment; *
the waters stand above the hills.
- 7 At your rebuke they fled; *
at the voice of your thunder they hastened away.
- 8 They went up as high as the hills, and down to the
valleys beneath, *
even to the place you had appointed for them.
- 9 You have set bounds for them which they shall not pass; *
neither shall they again cover the earth.
- 10 You send the springs into the rivers, *
which run among the hills.
- 11 All beasts of the field drink thereof, *
and the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
- 12 Beside them shall the birds of the air have their habitation *
and sing among the branches.
- 13 You water the hills from above; *
the earth is filled with the fruit of your works.
- 14 You bring forth grass for the cattle, *

- and plants for the service of mankind,
15 That they may bring food out of the earth, and
wine that makes glad the heart, *
and oil to make a cheerful countenance, and
bread to strengthen the heart.
- 16 The trees of the Lord also are full of sap, *
even the cedars of Lebanon which he planted,
17 Wherein the birds make their nests, *
and the fir trees are a dwelling for the stork.
- 18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, *
And so are the stony cliffs for the rock badgers.
- 19 You appointed the moon to mark the seasons, *
and the sun knows its going down.
- 20 You make darkness that it may be night, *
in which all the beasts of the forest move.
- 21 The lions, roaring after their prey, *
seek their meat from God.
- 22 The sun arises, and they go away together, *
and lay themselves down in their dens.
- 23 Man goes forth to his work, *
and to his labor until the evening.
- 24 O Lord, how manifold are your works; *
in wisdom you made them all; the earth is full
of your creatures.
- 25 So is the great and wide sea also, *
in which are things creeping innumerable,
creatures both small and great.
- 26 There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan, *
whom you made to take its pleasure therein.
- 27 These all wait upon you, *
that you may give them food in due season.

- 28 When you give it to them, they gather it, *
and when you open your hand, they are filled
with good things.
- 29 When you hide your face, they are troubled; *
when you take away their breath, they die, and
are turned again to their dust.
- 30 When you let your breath go forth, they shall be made, *
and you shall renew the face of the earth.
- 31 The glorious majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever; *
the Lord shall rejoice in his works.
- 32 He looks at the earth and it trembles; *
if he even touches the hills, they shall smoke.
- 33 I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; *
I will praise my God while I have my being,
- 34 And so shall my words please him; *
my joy shall be in the Lord.
- 35 As for sinners, they shall perish from the earth, and
the ungodly shall come to an end. *
Praise the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord.

- 1 Give thanks unto the Lord and call upon his Name;*
tell the peoples what things he has done.
- 2 O let your songs be of him, and praise him, *
and let your speech be of all his wondrous works.
- 3 Rejoice in his holy Name; *
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
- 4 Seek the Lord and his strength; *
seek his face evermore.
- 5 Remember the marvelous works that he has done, *
his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth,
- 6 O seed of Abraham his servant, *
O children of Jacob his chosen.
- 7 He is the Lord our God; *
his judgments are in all the world.
- 8 He has always been mindful of his covenant, *
and the promise that he made to a thousand
generations,
- 9 Even the covenant that he made with Abraham, *
and the oath that he swore to Isaac,
- 10 Which he appointed to Jacob for a law, *
and to Israel for an everlasting testament,
- 11 Saying, "To you will I give the land of Canaan *
to be the portion of your inheritance."
- 12 When there were yet but a few of them, *
and they were strangers in the land,
- 13 And they wandered from nation to nation, *
and from one kingdom to another,
- 14 He allowed no one to do them wrong, *
but reprov'd even kings for their sakes:

15 “Do not touch my Anointed, *
and do my prophets no harm.”

16 Moreover, he called for a famine in the land *
and destroyed all the provision of bread.

17 But he had sent a man before them: *
Joseph, who was sold to be a bondservant,

18 Whose feet they hurt in the stocks; *
they put an iron collar around his neck.

19 Until the time came that his sayings were fulfilled, *
the word of the Lord tried him.

20 The king sent and delivered him; *
the ruler of the people let him go free.

21 He made him lord over his house, *
and ruler of all his possessions,

22 That he might instruct his princes according to his will *
and teach his elders wisdom.

23 Israel also came into Egypt, *
and Jacob was a stranger in the land of Ham.

24 And he increased his people exceedingly, *
and made them stronger than their enemies,

25 Whose heart he turned, so that they hated his people, *
and dealt deceitfully with his servants.

26 Then he sent Moses his servant, *
and Aaron whom he had chosen,

27 And they worked his signs among them, *
and wonders in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and it was dark; *
but they were not obedient to his word.

29 He turned their waters into blood *
and caused their fish to die.

30 Their land brought forth frogs, *

- even in their kings' chambers.
- 31 He spoke the word, and there came all manner of flies, *
and gnats in all their borders.
- 32 He gave them hailstones for rain, *
and flames of fire in their land.
- 33 He smote their vines also, and their fig trees, *
and destroyed the trees that were in their borders.
- 34 He spoke the word, and the grasshoppers came, and
locusts innumerable, *
which ate up all the grass in their land and
devoured the fruit of their ground.
- 35 He smote all the firstborn in their land, *
even the firstfruits of all their strength.
- 36 He brought forth Israel with silver and gold; *
in all their tribes there was not one who stumbled.
- 37 Egypt was glad at their departing, *
for they were afraid of them.
- 38 He spread out a cloud to be a covering, *
and fire to give light in the night season.
- 39 At their desire he brought quail, *
and he filled them with the bread of heaven.
- 40 He opened the rock, and the waters flowed out, *
so that rivers ran in the dry places.
- 41 For he remembered his holy promise *
and Abraham his servant.
- 42 And he brought forth his people with joy, *
and his chosen ones with gladness,
- 43 And gave them the lands of the nations, *
and they took the labors of the peoples in possession,
- 44 That they might keep his statutes *
and observe his laws. Praise the Lord.

- 1 O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, *
and his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, *
or show forth all his praise?
- 3 Blessed are those who act with justice, *
and who always do righteousness.
- 4 Remember me, O Lord, according to the favor that
you show to your people; *
O visit me with your salvation,
- 5 That I may see the felicity of your chosen, *
and rejoice in the gladness of your people, and
give thanks with your inheritance.
- 6 We have sinned like our fathers; *
we have done wrong and dealt wickedly.
- 7 Our fathers regarded not your wonders in Egypt, neither did they keep
your great goodness in remembrance, *
but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red Sea.
- 8 Nevertheless, he saved them for his Name's sake, *
that he might make his power known.
- 9 He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up; *
so he led them through the deep as through a wilderness.
- 10 And he saved them from the adversary's hand, *
and delivered them from the hand of the enemy.
- 11 As for those who troubled them, the waters
overwhelmed them; *
there was not one of them left.
- 12 Then they believed his words *
and sang praises unto him.
- 13 But soon they forgot his works *

and would not wait for his counsel.

14 A craving came upon them in the wilderness, *
and they tempted God in the desert.

15 So he gave them their desire, *
and sent leanness into their soul.

16 They were envious of Moses also in the camp, *
and of Aaron the holy one of the Lord.

17 So the earth opened and swallowed up Dathan *
and covered the company of Abiram,

18 And fire was kindled in their company; *
the flame burnt up the ungodly.

19 They made a calf in Horeb *
and worshiped a molten image.

20 Thus they exchanged their glory *
for the image of a calf that feeds on hay.

21 And they forgot God their Savior, *
who had done great things in Egypt,

22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, *
and fearful things by the Red Sea.

23 So he said he would have destroyed them, had not
Moses his chosen stood before him in the gap *
to turn away his wrathful indignation, lest he
should destroy them.

24 Then they scorned that pleasant land *
and gave no credence to his word,

25 But murmured in their tents *
and did not hearken to the voice of the Lord.

26 Then he lifted up his hand against them *
to overthrow them in the wilderness,

27 To cast out their seed among the nations, *
and to scatter them in all the lands.

28 They joined themselves to Baal-Peor *
and ate the offerings to the dead.

29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their
wanton deeds, *
and the plague broke out among them.

30 Then Phineas stood up and interceded, *
and so the plague was ended;

31 And that was counted to him as righteousness *
among all generations for evermore.

32 They angered him also at the waters of strife, *
so that he punished Moses for their misdeeds;

33 For they provoked him to anger, *
so that he spoke rashly with his lips.

34 Neither did they destroy the peoples *
as the Lord commanded them,

35 But intermingled among the nations *
and learned their heathen ways,

36 So that they worshiped their idols, which became a
snare to them; *
they offered their sons and their daughters to demons,

37 And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their
sons and of their daughters, *
whom they offered to the idols of Canaan; and
the land was defiled with blood.

38 Thus were they defiled by their own works *
and went whoring with their own deeds.

39 Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled
against his people, *
and he abhorred his own inheritance,

40 And he gave them over into the hands of the nations, *
and those who hated them were lords over them.

- 41 Their enemies oppressed them *
and held them in subjection.
- 42 Many a time did he deliver them, *
but they rebelled against him through their
own devices, and were brought down in their
wickedness.
- 43 Nevertheless, when he saw their adversity, *
when he heard their lamentation,
- 44 He remembered his covenant and pitied them,
according to the multitude of his mercies; *
he made all those who led them away captive to
pity them.
- 45 Deliver us, O Lord our God, and gather us from
among the nations, *
that we may give thanks to your holy Name
and make our boast of your praise.
- 46 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting
and world without end, *
and let all the people say, "Amen." Praise the Lord.

THE BOOK OF CONSOLATION (FROM JEREMIAH 29-33)

JEREMIAH'S LETTER TO THE EXILES

These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem. The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

"For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

RESTORATION FOR ISRAEL AND JUDAH

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. For behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the LORD, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it.”

These are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah:

“Thus says the LORD: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace.

Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child?

Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale?

Alas! That day is so great there is none like it;

it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, declares the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off your neck, and I will burst your bonds, and foreigners shall no more make a servant of him. But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.

“Then fear not, O Jacob my servant, declares the LORD, nor be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from far away, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with you to save you, declares the LORD;

I will make a full end of all the nations among whom I scattered you, but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished.

“For thus says the LORD: Your hurt is incurable, and your wound is grievous. There is none to uphold your cause, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you. All your lovers have forgotten you; they care nothing for you; for I have dealt you the blow of an enemy, the punishment of a merciless foe, because your guilt is great, because your sins are flagrant.

Why do you cry out over your hurt? Your pain is incurable.

Because your guilt is great, because your sins are flagrant, I have done these things to you.

Therefore all who devour you shall be devoured, and all your foes, every one of them, shall go into captivity; those who plunder you shall be plundered, and all who prey on you I will make a prey. For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the LORD, because they have called you an outcast: 'It is Zion, for whom no one cares!' "Thus says the LORD: Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwellings; the city shall be rebuilt on its mound, and the palace shall stand where it used to be. Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the voices of those who celebrate. I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will make them honored, and they shall not be small.

Their children shall be as they were of old, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all who oppress them. Their prince shall be one of themselves; their ruler shall come out from their midst; I will make him draw near, and he shall approach me, for who would dare of himself to approach me? declares the LORD. And you shall be my people, and I will be your God."Behold the storm of the LORD! Wrath has gone forth,a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intentions of his mind. In the latter days you will understand this.

THE LORD WILL TURNING MOURNING TO JOY

“At that time, declares the LORD, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people.”

Thus says the LORD:

“The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines and shall go forth in the dance of the merry-makers. Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant and shall enjoy the fruit.

For there shall be a day when watchmen will call in the hill country of Ephraim: ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.’”

For thus says the LORD: “Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.’

Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

“Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’

For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more.

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the LORD.”

Thus says the LORD: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”

Thus says the LORD:

“Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work, declares the LORD, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future, declares the LORD, and your children shall come back to their own country.

I have heard Ephraim grieving,

‘You have disciplined me, and I was disciplined, like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored, for you are the LORD my God.

For after I had turned away, I relented, and after I was instructed, I struck my thigh;

I was ashamed, and I was confounded, because I bore the disgrace of my youth.’

Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my darling child?

For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still.

Therefore my heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, declares the LORD.

“Set up road markers for yourself; make yourself guideposts; consider well the highway, the road by which you went.

Return, O virgin Israel, return to these your cities. How long will you waver, O faithless daughter? For the LORD has created a new thing on the earth: a woman encircles a man.”

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Once more they shall use these words in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I restore their fortunes:

“‘The LORD bless you, O habitation of righteousness, O holy hill!’

And Judah and all its cities shall dwell there together, and the farmers and those who wander with their flocks. For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish.”

At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me.

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass that as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring harm, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, declares the LORD. In those days they shall no longer say:

“‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’

But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

THE NEW COVENANT

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the LORD of hosts is his name:

“If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the LORD, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever.”

Thus says the LORD:

“If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the LORD.”

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when the city shall be rebuilt for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then turn to Goah. The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be sacred to the LORD. It shall not be plucked up or overthrown anymore forever.”

JEREMIAH BUYS A FIELD DURING THE SIEGE

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah. For Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him, saying, “Why do you prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall capture it; Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye. And he shall take Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall remain until I visit him,’ declares the LORD. Though you fight against the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed’?”

Jeremiah said, “The word of the LORD came to me: Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you and say, ‘Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.’ Then Hanamel my cousin came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, ‘Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.’ Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. “And I bought the field at Anathoth from Hanamel my cousin, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. Then I took the sealed deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions and the open copy. And I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my cousin, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard. I charged Baruch in their presence, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware vessel, that they may last for a long time. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.’”

JEREMIAH PRAYS FOR UNDERSTANDING

“After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying: ‘Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. You show steadfast love to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts, great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man, rewarding each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds. You have shown signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and to this day in Israel and among all mankind, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day. You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great terror. And you gave them this land, which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. And they entered and took possession of it. But they did not obey your voice or walk in your law. They did nothing of all you commanded them to do. Therefore you have made all this disaster come upon them. Behold, the siege mounds have come up to the city to take it, and because of sword and famine and pestilence the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. What you spoke has come to pass, and behold, you see it. Yet you, O Lord GOD, have said to me, “Buy the field for money and get witnesses”—though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.”’”

The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me? Therefore, thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hands of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall capture it. The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city shall come and set this city on fire and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs offerings have been made to

Baal and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods, to provoke me to anger. For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth. The children of Israel have done nothing but provoke me to anger by the work of their hands, declares the LORD. This city has aroused my anger and wrath, from the day it was built to this day, so that I will remove it from my sight because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah that they did to provoke me to anger—their kings and their officials, their priests and their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They have turned to me their back and not their face. And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction. They set up their abominations in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE; I WILL BE THEIR GOD

“Now therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine, and by pestilence’: Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

“For thus says the LORD: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good that I promise them. Fields shall be bought in this land of which you are saying, ‘It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.’ Fields shall be bought for money, and deeds shall be signed and sealed and witnessed, in the land of Benjamin, in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb; for I will restore their fortunes, declares the LORD.”

THE LORD PROMISES PEACE

The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard: “Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it—the LORD is his name: Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and against the sword: They are coming in to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill them with the dead bodies of men whom I shall strike down in my anger and my wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their evil. Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security. I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.

“Thus says the LORD: In this place of which you say, ‘It is a waste without man or beast,’ in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man or inhabitant or beast, there shall be heard again the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD:

“‘Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!’ For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the LORD. “Thus says the LORD of hosts: In this place that is waste, without man or beast, and in all of its cities, there shall again be habitations of shepherds resting their flocks. In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the LORD.

THE LORD'S ETERNAL COVENANT WITH DAVID

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’”

“For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever.”

The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: “Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.”

The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: “Have you not observed that these people are saying, ‘The LORD has rejected the two clans that he chose’? Thus they have despised my people so that they are no longer a nation in their sight. Thus says the LORD: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.”

THE LORD'S STEADFAST LOVE IN HOSEA

HOSEA'S WIFE AND CHILDREN

When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.” So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

And the LORD said to him, “Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”

She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, “Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. And the LORD said, “Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.” And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS PUNISHED

Say to your brothers, "You are my people," and to your sisters, "You have received mercy."

"Plead with your mother, plead—
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband—
that she put away her whoring from her face,
and her adultery from between her breasts;
lest I strip her naked
and make her as in the day she was born,
and make her like a wilderness,
and make her like a parched land,
and kill her with thirst.

Upon her children also I will have no mercy,
because they are children of whoredom.
For their mother has played the whore;
she who conceived them has acted shamefully.

For she said, 'I will go after my lovers,
who give me my bread and my water,
my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'
Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns,
and I will build a wall against her,
so that she cannot find her paths.

She shall pursue her lovers
but not overtake them,
and she shall seek them
but shall not find them.

Then she shall say,
'I will go and return to my first husband,

for it was better for me then than now.’
And she did not know
that it was I who gave her
the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and who lavished on her silver and gold,
which they used for Baal.
Therefore I will take back
my grain in its time,
and my wine in its season,
and I will take away my wool and my flax,
which were to cover her nakedness.
Now I will uncover her lewdness
in the sight of her lovers,
and no one shall rescue her out of my hand.
And I will put an end to all her mirth,
her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths,
and all her appointed feasts.
And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees,
of which she said,
‘These are my wages,
which my lovers have given me.’
I will make them a forest,
and the beasts of the field shall devour them.
And I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals
when she burned offerings to them
and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry,
and went after her lovers
and forgot me, declares the LORD.

THE LORD'S MERCY ON ISRAEL

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her.
And there I will give her her vineyards
and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.
And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth,
as at the time when she came out of the land of
Egypt.

“And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

“And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD,
I will answer the heavens,
and they shall answer the earth,
and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and
the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel,
and I will sow her for myself in the land.
And I will have mercy on No Mercy,
and I will say to Not My People, ‘You are my people’;
and he shall say, ‘You are my God.’”

HOSEA REDEEMS HIS WIFE

And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.” For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

THE LORD ACCUSES ISRAEL

Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel,
for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no
faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is
swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all
bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Therefore the land mourns,
and all who dwell in it languish,
and also the beasts of the field
and the birds of the heavens,
and even the fish of the sea are taken away.

Yet let no one contend,
and let none accuse,
for with you is my contention, O priest.

You shall stumble by day;
the prophet also shall stumble with you by night;
and I will destroy your mother.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;
because you have rejected knowledge,

PUNISHMENT COMING FOR ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Hear this, O priests!

Pay attention, O house of Israel!

Give ear, O house of the king!

For the judgment is for you;
for you have been a snare at Mizpah
and a net spread upon Tabor.

And the revoltors have gone deep into slaughter,
but I will discipline all of them.

I know Ephraim,

and Israel is not hidden from me;

for now, O Ephraim, you have played the whore;
Israel is defiled.

Their deeds do not permit them
to return to their God.

For the spirit of whoredom is within them,
and they know not the LORD.

The pride of Israel testifies to his face;

Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in his guilt;

Judah also shall stumble with them.

With their flocks and herds they shall go
to seek the LORD,

but they will not find him;

he has withdrawn from them.

They have dealt faithlessly with the LORD;

for they have borne alien children.

Now the new moon shall devour them with their
fields.

Blow the horn in Gibeah,

the trumpet in Ramah.

Sound the alarm at Beth-aven;
we follow you, O Benjamin!
Ephraim shall become a desolation
in the day of punishment;
among the tribes of Israel
I make known what is sure.
The princes of Judah have become
like those who move the landmark;
upon them I will pour out
my wrath like water.
Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment,
because he was determined to go after filth.
But I am like a moth to Ephraim,
and like dry rot to the house of Judah.
When Ephraim saw his sickness,
and Judah his wound,
then Ephraim went to Assyria,
and sent to the great king.
But he is not able to cure you
or heal your wound.
For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
and like a young lion to the house of Judah.
I, even I, will tear and go away;
I will carry off, and no one shall rescue.
I will return again to my place,
until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face,
and in their distress earnestly seek me.

ISRAEL AND JUDAH ARE UNREPENTANT

“Come, let us return to the LORD;
for he has torn us, that he may heal us;
he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.
After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that we may live before him.
Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD;
his going out is sure as the dawn;
he will come to us as the showers,
as the spring rains that water the earth.”

What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?
What shall I do with you, O Judah?
Your love is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes early away.
Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;
I have slain them by the words of my mouth,
and my judgment goes forth as the light.
For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

But like Adam they transgressed the covenant;
there they dealt faithlessly with me.
Gilead is a city of evildoers,
tracked with blood.
As robbers lie in wait for a man,
so the priests band together;
they murder on the way to Shechem;
they commit villainy.
In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing;
Ephraim’s whoredom is there; Israel is defiled.
For you also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed.

When I restore the fortunes of my people,
I would redeem them,
 but they speak lies against me.
They do not cry to me from the heart,
 but they wail upon their beds;
for grain and wine they gash themselves;
 they rebel against me.
Although I trained and strengthened their arms,
 yet they devise evil against me.
They return, but not upward;
 they are like a treacherous bow;
their princes shall fall by the sword
 because of the insolence of their tongue.
This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.
Sow for yourselves righteousness;
 reap steadfast love;
 break up your fallow ground,
for it is the time to seek the LORD,
 that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.
You have plowed iniquity;
 you have reaped injustice;
 you have eaten the fruit of lies.
Because you have trusted in your own way
 and in the multitude of your warriors,
 therefore the tumult of war shall arise among your
 people,
and all your fortresses shall be destroyed,
 as Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel on the day of
 Battle; mothers were dashed in pieces with their children.
Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel,
 because of your great evil. At dawn the king of Israel
 shall be utterly cut off.

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
The more they were called,
the more they went away;
they kept sacrificing to the Baals
and burning offerings to idols.

Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;
I took them up by their arms,
but they did not know that I healed them.
I led them with cords of kindness,
with the bands of love,
and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on
their jaws,
and I bent down to them and fed them.

They shall not return to the land of Egypt,
but Assyria shall be their king,
because they have refused to return to me.
The sword shall rage against their cities,
consume the bars of their gates,
and devour them because of their own counsels.
My people are bent on turning away from me,
and though they call out to the Most High,
he shall not raise them up at all.

How can I give you up, O Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, O Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?

How can I treat you like Zeboiim?
My heart recoils within me;
my compassion grows warm and tender.
I will not execute my burning anger;
I will not again destroy Ephraim;
for I am God and not a man,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come in wrath.

They shall go after the LORD;
he will roar like a lion;
when he roars,
his children shall come trembling from the west;
they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt,
and like doves from the land of Assyria,
and I will return them to their homes, declares the
LORD.

Ephraim has surrounded me with lies,
and the house of Israel with deceit,
but Judah still walks with God
and is faithful to the Holy One.

Ephraim feeds on the wind
and pursues the east wind all day long;
they multiply falsehood and violence;
they make a covenant with Assyria,
and oil is carried to Egypt.

THE LORD'S INDICTMENT OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

The LORD has an indictment against Judah
and will punish Jacob according to his ways;
he will repay him according to his deeds.
In the womb he took his brother by the heel,
and in his manhood he strove with God.
He strove with the angel and prevailed;
he wept and sought his favor.
He met God at Bethel,
and there God spoke with us—
the LORD, the God of hosts,
the LORD is his memorial name:
“So you, by the help of your God, return,
hold fast to love and justice,
and wait continually for your God.”
A merchant, in whose hands are false balances,
he loves to oppress.
Ephraim has said, “Ah, but I am rich;
I have found wealth for myself;
in all my labors they cannot find in me iniquity or
sin.”
I am the LORD your God
from the land of Egypt;
I will again make you dwell in tents,
as in the days of the appointed feast.
I spoke to the prophets;
it was I who multiplied visions,
and through the prophets gave parables.
If there is iniquity in Gilead,
they shall surely come to nothing:

in Gilgal they sacrifice bulls;
their altars also are like stone heaps
on the furrows of the field.
Jacob fled to the land of Aram;
there Israel served for a wife,
and for a wife he guarded sheep.
By a prophet the LORD brought Israel up from
Egypt,
and by a prophet he was guarded.
Ephraim has given bitter provocation;
so his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him
and will repay him for his disgraceful deeds.

THE LORD'S RELENTLESS JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

When Ephraim spoke, there was trembling;
he was exalted in Israel,
but he incurred guilt through Baal and died.
And now they sin more and more,
and make for themselves metal images,
idols skillfully made of their silver,
all of them the work of craftsmen.
It is said of them,
“Those who offer human sacrifice kiss calves!”
Therefore they shall be like the morning mist
or like the dew that goes early away,
like the chaff that swirls from the threshing floor
or like smoke from a window.
But I am the LORD your God
from the land of Egypt;
you know no God but me,
and besides me there is no savior.
It was I who knew you in the wilderness,
in the land of drought;
but when they had grazed, they became full,
they were filled, and their heart was lifted up;
therefore they forgot me.
So I am to them like a lion;
like a leopard I will lurk beside the way.
I will fall upon them like a bear robbed of her cubs;
I will tear open their breast,
and there I will devour them like a lion,
as a wild beast would rip them open.

He destroys you, O Israel,
for you are against me, against your helper.
Where now is your king, to save you in all your cities?
Where are all your rulers—
those of whom you said,
“Give me a king and princes”?
I gave you a king in my anger,
and I took him away in my wrath.
The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up;
his sin is kept in store.
The pangs of childbirth come for him,
but he is an unwise son,
for at the right time he does not present himself
at the opening of the womb.
I shall ransom them from the power of Sheol;
I shall redeem them from Death.
O Death, where are your plagues?
O Sheol, where is your sting?
Compassion is hidden from my eyes.
Though he may flourish among his brothers,
the east wind, the wind of the LORD, shall come,
rising from the wilderness,
and his fountain shall dry up;
his spring shall be parched;
it shall strip his treasury
of every precious thing.
Samaria shall bear her guilt,
because she has rebelled against her God;
they shall fall by the sword;
their little ones shall be dashed in pieces,
and their pregnant women ripped open.

A PLEA TO RETURN TO THE LORD

Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God,
for you have stumbled because of your iniquity.
Take with you words
and return to the LORD;
say to him,
“Take away all iniquity;
accept what is good,
and we will pay with bulls
the vows of our lips.
Assyria shall not save us;
we will not ride on horses;
and we will say no more, ‘Our God,’
to the work of our hands.
In you the orphan finds mercy.”

I will heal their apostasy;
I will love them freely,
for my anger has turned from them.
I will be like the dew to Israel;
he shall blossom like the lily;
he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon;
his shoots shall spread out;
his beauty shall be like the olive,
and his fragrance like Lebanon.
They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow;
they shall flourish like the grain;
they shall blossom like the vine;
their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols?

It is I who answer and look after you.

I am like an evergreen cypress;

from me comes your fruit.

Whoever is wise, let him understand these things;

whoever is discerning, let him know them;

for the ways of the LORD are right,

and the upright walk in them,

but transgressors stumble in them.

SERVANT SONGS OF ISALAH

THE LORD'S CHOSEN SERVANT

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not Quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be Discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." Sing to the LORD

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. And he said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” But I said, “I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God.”

And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—he says:

“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

Thus says the LORD: “In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages, saying to the prisoners, ‘Come out,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’ They shall feed along the ways; on all bare heights shall be their pasture; they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them. And I will make all my mountains a road, and my highways shall be raised up. Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene.”

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted. The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled! This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.

HE WAS PIERCED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS

Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. As many were astonished at you—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand. Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

THE SERMONS OF ACTS

PETER'S SERMON AT PENTECOST

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, Before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him,

“I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.”

“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’” Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

PETER SPEAKS IN SOLOMON'S PORTICO

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. ^aIn the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and ^bRighteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

“And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’ And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”

PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE COUNCIL

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” And when they had further

threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

“Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

GENTILES HEAR THE GOOD NEWS

So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (‘he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit ‘just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

PETER REPORTS TO THE CHURCH

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” But Peter began and explained it to them in order: “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

STEPHEN'S SPEECH

And the high priest said, "Are these things so?" And Stephen said:

"Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.' Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child. And God spoke to this effect—that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. 'But I will judge the nation that they serve,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.' And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and bJacob of the twelve patriarchs.

"And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first visit. And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. And Jacob went down into Egypt, and phe died, he and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

"But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive. At this time

Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

"When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?' But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'" At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

"Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'

"This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.' This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us. Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of

Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:

“Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices, during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship; and I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.’

“Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David, who found favor in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says,

“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?” “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem, ¹ but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.” So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said:

“Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’

“Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to

us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’

And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

“I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’

Therefore he says also in another psalm,

“You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’

For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: “Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.”

As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ICONIUM

Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, and there they continued to preach the gospel.

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA

Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking. And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”

The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”

And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,

“After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.’

Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”

PAUL ADDRESSES THE AREOPAGUS

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.²⁴” The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, ‘and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for

“In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’

Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

PAUL SPEAKS TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. And when they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.⁶ I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

PAUL SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE

As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek? Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?” Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.” And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

“Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you.”

And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language,¹ they became even more quiet. And he said: “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand³ the voice of the one who was speaking to me. And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.’ And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, ¹came to me, and standing by me said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight.’ And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

“When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’ And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

PAUL BEFORE FELIX AT CASAREA

And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul. And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: “Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. ⁴ But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him.

The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so. And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings. While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia—they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, other than this one thing that I cried

out while standing among them: ‘It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.’”

So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense:

“I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

“My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

“I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of ‘Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

“In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me

and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

“Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.” But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. ²⁶For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, “This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.” And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

A LETTER ON MINISTRY (2ND CORINTHIANS 1-6)

THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

PAUL'S CHANGE OF PLANS

For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand—just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace. I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

FORGIVE THE SINNER

Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

TRIUMPH IN CHRIST

When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

MINISTER OF THE NEW COVENANT

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

TREASURES IN JARS OF CLAY

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

OUR HEAVENLY DWELLING

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything. We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also.